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MEET THE REAL LONE RANGER

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WELCOME JANUARY 2022

The Romans ruled Britain for nearly four centuries, changing the face of the island forever. Turn to page 28 to discover the story of the invasion and its lasting impact on the lives of the native British population

In AD 43, the fearsome Roman army landed in southern Britain, determined to absorb the remote island into its mighty empire. Roman legions swept across the countryside, crushing local resistance and subduing its native tribes, and bringing with them a taste of Roman life: from new roads and infrastructure, to a new religion. In this month's Essential Guide, with the help of expert Dr Miles Russell, **we examine the impact and legacy of the Roman invasion on the people of Britannia** – from Boudica's famous rebellion, to life on Hadrian's Wall – and find out why Roman rule crumbled in c410 AD. Start reading from page 28.

Elsewhere, we take a look at the remarkable story of **Bass Reeves, the first black deputy US marshal west of the Mississippi River**, whose dedication to law and order saw him apprehend thousands of criminals during his career, including his own son. We also speak to actor Gary Beadle, who plays Bass Reeves in the current BBC One drama *Around the World in 80 Days* (*page 65*).

Also this month, as World War II film *Operation Mincemeat* arrives in cinemas across the UK, we **explore how British intelligence officers pulled off one of the most successful wartime deceptions in history** (*page 56*). Plus, we tell the story of aeronauts John Jeffries and Jean-Pierre Blanchard, who became the first to cross the English Channel in a hot air balloon, in 1785 (*page 16*), and **discover what might have happened had Britain remained neutral in World War I** (*page 70*).

Happy New Year to all our readers!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

3,000
The number of suspects arrested by US Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves during his storied career

87
The number of days that Publius Helvius Pertinax ruled as Roman emperor before his murder in AD 193

>19,500
The number of episodes of BBC Radio 4 favourite *The Archers* that have aired since 1951

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ON THE COVER: FIGURES – JULIUS CAESAR AND BOUDICA, ALAMY X4, GETTY IMAGES X5, ARCANGEL X1 / ON THIS PAGE: ALAMY X1, JENI NOTT X1

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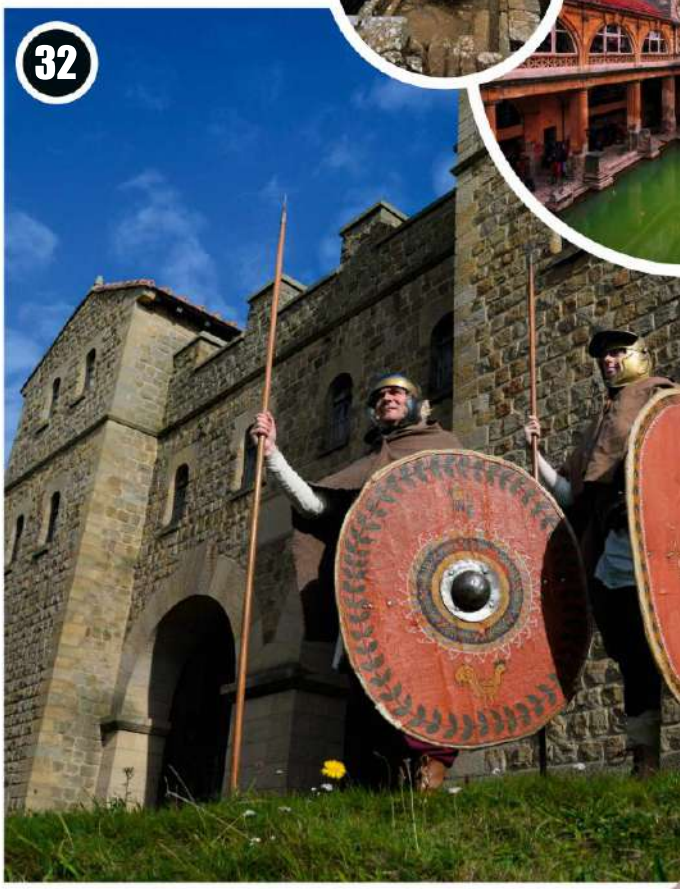

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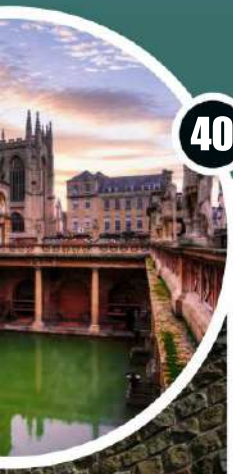

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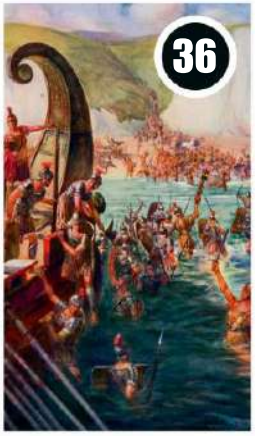
◀ Heated baths and 'flushing' toilets were just two of the many innovations that the Romans brought to their newly conquered territory



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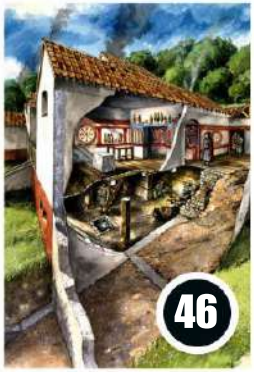

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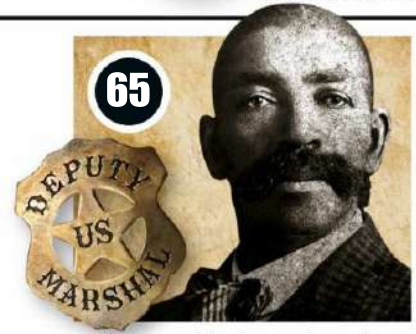

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SNAPSHOTS

1912
TEA AND SKATES

In a much-needed break from ice-skating, these women enjoy a warming cup of tea and coffee on the frozen Brent reservoir in Hendon, Middlesex (now part of Greater London). Ice-skating enjoyed a boost in popularity during the mid-19th century after it was made fashionable by Empress Eugénie of France, wife of Napoleon III. Indeed, such was its appeal in Britain that the Victorians became the first to build artificial ice rinks – allowing the pastime to be enjoyed even in the height of summer. A few early ice rinks remained successful, but they were expensive to maintain, and the chemicals needed to keep the ice frozen gave off an unpleasant smell.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

c1900
REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Crowds in Tokyo watch on in awe as local firefighters display their agility in death-defying stunts – all while perched on top of bamboo ladders. Since the Edo period (1603–1867), Japanese firefighters have demonstrated their skills during the Dezomeshiki festival each January. The first fire brigades consisted of a team of firefighters led by one man atop a ladder who would instruct his colleagues. Today, the festival includes helicopters and trucks, but the ladder acrobatics remain as a way of honouring the bravery of those early firefighters who climbed on top of burning buildings to break them down and prevent blazes from spreading.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

c1985
CITY OF GOLD

In 1979, gold was discovered in a stream near a village in northern Brazil. Once news of the find leaked, thousands flocked to the real-life El Dorado – known as Serra Pelada – which eventually became the largest open-air mine in the world. Up to 100,000 men worked in miserable conditions, creating a crater some 200 metres wide – although each had chosen to be there in the hopes of making their fortune. It was dangerous work, involving constant digging and carrying heavy sacks up flimsy wooden ladders and steep cliffs. Although some prospectors struck lucky, the mine had its dark side, too. Crime and violence became rife in the town that grew up alongside it, and women and underage girls would sell sex in exchange for gold.

GETTY IMAGES

THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH...

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

MAIN: **The carved falcon holds a sceptre and wears a crown**

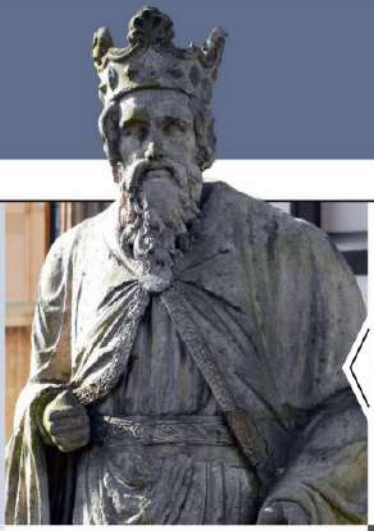
BELOW RIGHT: **A conservator carries out restoration work on the delicate artefact**

BELOW LEFT: **A 19th-century painting imagines Anne Boleyn's first encounter with Henry VIII**

WOODEN FALCON BOASTS BOLEYN LINK

A carved wooden falcon, bought for £75, has been revealed to have belonged to Anne Boleyn – the second wife of Henry VIII. The item's connection to the tragic queen, who was found guilty of high treason and subsequently executed in 1536, escalates its worth to around £200,000. Antiques dealer Paul Fitzsimmons, who purchased the item at auction, first spotted its royal link thanks to the presence of a crown and sceptre. The falcon was Anne's heraldic badge and similar carvings adorn the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace. The piece will now go on long-term loan to the palace, where it likely adorned the queen's private apartments. After Anne's execution, Henry VIII ordered all traces of his former wife to be destroyed, so the carving is a rare find indeed.

GETTY X3, PAUL FITZSIMMONS/MARHAMCHURCH ANTIQUES LTD X2, ALAMY X3, TEJPAL SINGH RALMILL COLLECTION



PUNJAB WAR CONTRIBUTION REVEALED

The records of around 320,000 Punjab soldiers who fought for Britain during World War I have been uncovered and digitised, after lying unread in the basement of the Lahore Museum in Pakistan for 97 years. Punjabis made up around one sixth of the British empire's overseas forces, yet their efforts have gone largely unknown. While descendants of British and Irish WWI veterans have long been able to search public service record databases for information, no such facility has existed for the families of Punjabi soldiers until now. Find out more about the project at *punjabww1.com*.

ALFRED THE GREAT STATUE FOUND TO HAVE ROMAN PAST

Conservation work on a statue of Alfred the Great in London has revealed that part of the monument originally depicted a Roman deity. Initially thought to have been created in the medieval era, the statue actually dates to the Roman occupation of Britain; its lower half, made of Bath stone, once formed part of a three-metre-tall statue of the Roman goddess Minerva, probably carved in the mid-second century AD. The statue's torso, meanwhile, has been found to be younger than expected, and was created at some point after the 18th century.

CULLODEN FACES FRESH NEW BATTLE

A campaign has been launched to protect the site of the last Jacobite rising from housing development. Archaeologists and historians, with backing from the National Trust for Scotland, have commissioned new digs to take place at the site of the battle of Culloden, near Inverness, to try and clarify the precise boundaries of the battlefield and ensure it is not damaged. The famous clash, fought on 16 April 1746, saw an army of Jacobite troops led by Bonnie Prince Charlie roundly defeated by government soldiers, ending the possibility of a Stuart restoration to the throne.

$13 million

The record-breaking price, at auction, of a rare 54-page manuscript by Albert Einstein, showing the foundations of his theory of relativity

SUTTON HOO SHIP TO SET SAIL AGAIN

Volunteers building a replica of the world-famous Sutton Hoo longship have reached a new milestone in the vessel's construction. Members of the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company, founded in 2016, have now joined the first two completed pieces of the vessel together, with aims to have the full replica ready to sail by 2024. It's hoped that by bringing the vessel back to life – using authentic methods – the project will demonstrate the ingenuity of the original ship's creators. The real Sutton Hoo longship was first unearthed in rural Suffolk in 1939, and is thought to have served as the grave for an Anglo-Saxon king.

"We get people from all walks of life collected together to achieve one thing: putting on a good show"

ABOVE: **Nathaniel prepares a cannon for 'battle'. Although the Sealed Knot strives for historical authenticity, Nathaniel has to wear modern ear defenders, as the replica guns make an almighty bang when fired (*seen far left*)**

LEFT: **From a young age, Nathaniel looked certain to follow in his parents' footsteps; here he helps his father and grandfather work on a cannon carriage. Both were gun captains before him**

GAIL SHEPHEARD

Artillery gun captain in the Sealed Knot

Nathaniel Shepheard

WHAT IS THE SEALED KNOT AND HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED?

The Sealed Knot is a reenactment society that specialises in battles from the Civil Wars (1642–51). It is the largest and oldest of its kind in Britain, with thousands of members, and we put on events all around the country to show what a battle would have looked like, as well as everyday life in the 17th century.

I didn't so much become interested in the Sealed Knot, as was born into it. Both of my parents were active members of the Sealed Knot long before I was around: my mum joining in 1983 and my dad not long before that. As a child, I attended every event that my parents did, and I started participating as soon as I was old enough.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE (AND LEAST FAVOURITE) THINGS ABOUT BEING IN THE SEALED KNOT?

The shared interest between members is definitely my favourite aspect of being in the Sealed Knot; it certainly makes for an interesting bunch. We get people from all walks of life collected together to achieve one thing: putting on a good show.

When it comes to my least favourite, it has to be the toilets – by a country mile! The Sealed Knot does its best, to be fair. Our camp sites range from permanent venues, which are quite civilised, to just a field.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS AN ARTILLERY GUN CAPTAIN? DID YOU HAVE TO COMPLETE ANY SPECIALIST TRAINING?

Although many people in my regiment have had experience across several roles, our speciality is artillery – so when I joined the fielding members, I decided to take on the role of an artillery gun captain, commanding the cannons on the battlefield.

The Sealed Knot has its own training for artillery captains. This involves acquiring general knowledge regarding artillery, practising leadership skills and communication, and – of course – learning about health and safety. Keeping our people safe is always a priority! Additionally, all crew members who handle explosives must hold a licence issued by their local police force.

ABOVE: The tents may be modern, but the replica weapons used by the Sealed Knot are built to be as true to the 17th-century originals as possible

TOP: Nathaniel, wearing green, pictured with some of his fellow reenactors

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY INJURIES?

Bar the odd blister, thankfully no. Injury is always a risk – as with doing any physical activity – but we take many steps to reduce the likelihood. This includes making sure we complete our training and having qualified health and safety experts on site (we even have a dedicated medical regiment). While I pray that they are never needed, their skills and experience would be invaluable if there ever was an emergency.

IF YOU COULD REENACT BATTLES FROM ANY OTHER HISTORICAL PERIOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

If we are talking about periods broadly, I'd have to say medieval. This is kind of a trick answer, though, because the medieval period was so massive. It saw England develop in some interesting ways, defining and impacting the future to the extent you could say we still feel those changes today.

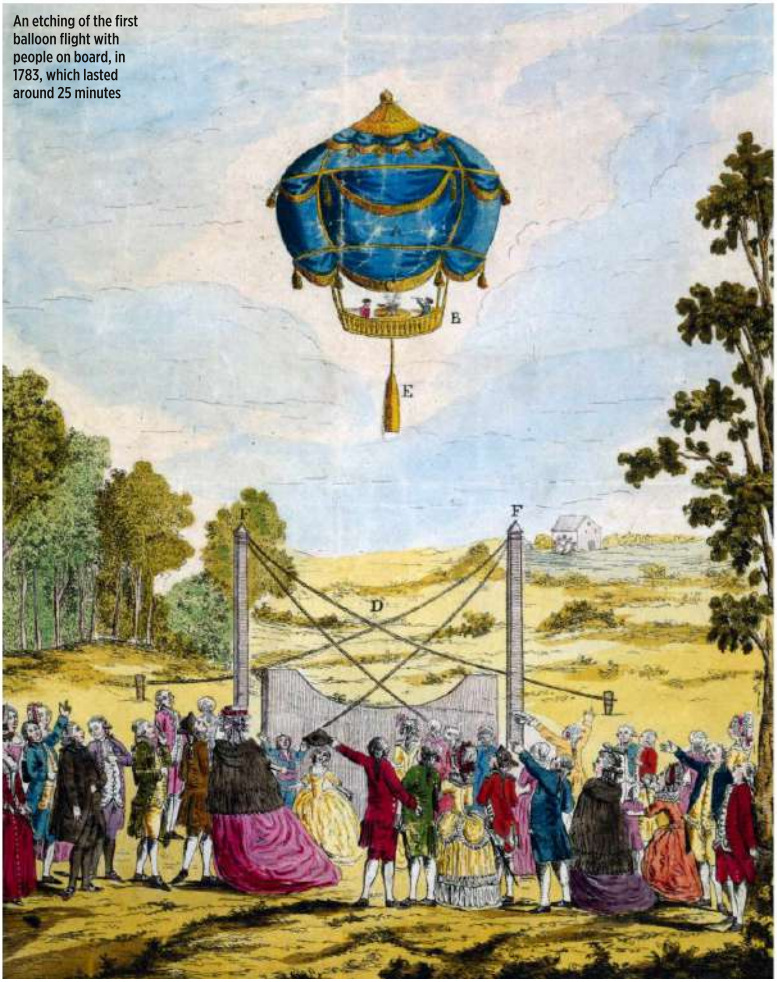
NATHANIEL SHEPHEARD is a gun captain in the Parliamentary army's Trayne of Artillery in the Sealed Knot. To learn more about Britain's oldest reenactment society, visit *sealedknot.org.uk*

The first crossing of the English Channel by air

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

Balloonomania was sweeping through France, England and beyond in the early 1780s as people's imaginations were captivated by an innovative, seemingly magical new form of travel: hot-air ballooning. A host of budding aviators, daring adventurers and record-setters took to the skies with their sights firmly set on continually reaching higher and thrusting further.

And it soon became clear that the first major step in long-distance balloon flight was going to be a successful crossing of the English Channel. At the narrowest point, just 21 miles of ocean separate Britain and France – it is possible to see one country from the other on a clear day – but this was a daunting prospect for anyone entrusting their lives to the little-tested, nascent technology. That is exactly what French aviation pioneer Jean-Pierre Blanchard and his American passenger John Jeffries did on 7 January 1785, when they became the first to cross the Channel safely... just about.



An etching of the first balloon flight with people on board, in 1783, which lasted around 25 minutes

GETTY IMAGES X5

HUMANS TAKE TO THE SKY

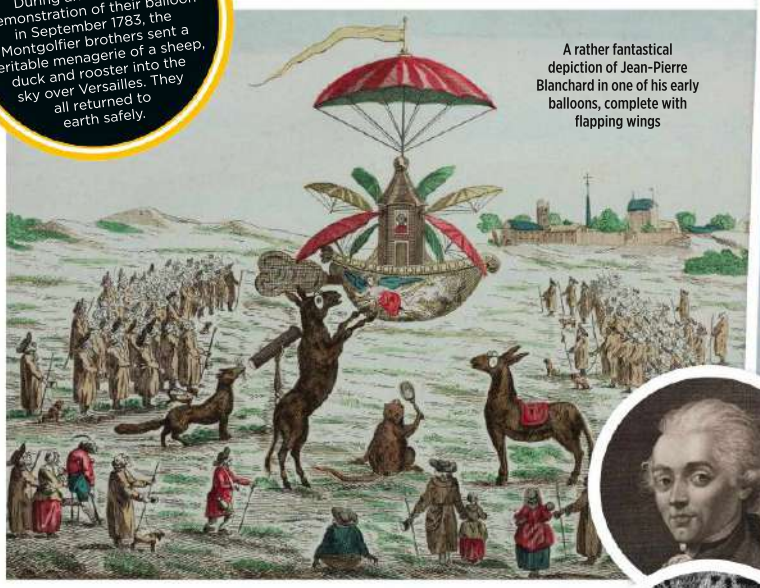
Less than 14 months earlier, in November 1783, French brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Étienne Montgolfier's paper-and-silk balloon completed the first untethered flight with people on board. Their invention reached an altitude of around 900 metres and travelled more than five miles above Paris. Just 10 days later, the French capital also witnessed the first manned hydrogen gas balloon flight.

Huge crowds gathered to observe these flights. This was something people had never seen before: humans flying in the sky like birds. The pilots became the celebrities of the day. The hype reached such heights that special souvenirs would be made to commemorate each flight, while balloons could be seen adorning everything, such as crockery and teapots. Fashion was balloon-inspired, with

DID YOU KNOW?

ZOO-MING ABOVE

During an early public demonstration of their balloon in September 1783, the Montgolfier brothers sent a veritable menagerie of a sheep, duck and rooster into the sky over Versailles. They all returned to earth safely.



A rather fantastical depiction of Jean-Pierre Blanchard in one of his early balloons, complete with flapping wings

> "There was one thing left they could do to make the balloon a little lighter – they could relieve themselves"

dresses boasting puffed sleeves known as *au ballon*, or coiffed hairstyles given names like *à la Montgolfier, au demi-ballon* or *à la Blanchard*.

Jean-Pierre Blanchard was already a well-known name before his Channel attempt, having completed flights in his native France and England. As well as a pilot, one of the first considered a professional aeronaut, he was also an inventor. While some of his additions, such as flapping wings and a windmill, may not have been that effective, Blanchard was confident his balloon could cross from Britain to France by air.

Flying over the Channel became a race among the pioneering balloonists. Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier – who had been one of the two men on board the Montgolfiers' balloon – wanted to take on the challenge. But he could not get everything ready before Blanchard.

John Jeffries was a wealthy American scientist, surgeon and balloon enthusiast. He had served for the British in the American Revolutionary War before moving to England, where he became acquainted with Blanchard. Together, they flew from London to Kent in late 1784. When that was successful, their attentions quickly turned to the greater prize, and Jeffries offered to fund the flight over the Channel – as long as he could be a passenger.

TOO MUCH WEIGHT

At around 1pm on 7 January 1785, Blanchard and Jeffries took off from Dover and began the crossing. It had taken a week of planning and preparations, which included testing a kite to check the winds were in their favour, and adding to the hydrogen balloon a rudder, propeller and some silk oars in the hope that the men could row through the air.

But halfway through the voyage, the pair were in serious trouble. Despite all the ballasts being thrown over the side, the balloon kept descending, and at an increasingly alarming rate. In a panic, they began throwing out everything they could, from food and equipment to their clothes. Blanchard even discarded his trousers in a bid to make the balloon maintain its height.

It was enough to get them over land in France, which meant they could toss away their cork life jackets (as they were no longer over water), but the danger had not passed. Over dense woodland, the balloon started dropping again. There was one thing left they could do to make the balloon a little lighter – they could relieve themselves.

"It almost instantly occurred to me that we could supply it [weight] from within ourselves," Blanchard later said. "From the recollection that we had drunk much at breakfast, and not having had any evacuation, and from the severe cold, little or no perspiration had taken place, that probably an extra quantity had been secreted by the kidneys, that we might now avail ourselves of by discharging."

They were able to obtain, Blanchard went on: "I verily believe, between five and six pounds of urine; which circumstance, however trivial or ludicrous it may seem, I have reason to believe, was of real utility to us."

With their bladders empty and the balloon still airborne, the pair made ▶

ABOVE: **John Jeffries' interest in flight began when he carried out weather observations in a balloon**

TOP: **Jean-Pierre Blanchard went on to fly in front of kings, emperors and the first US president**

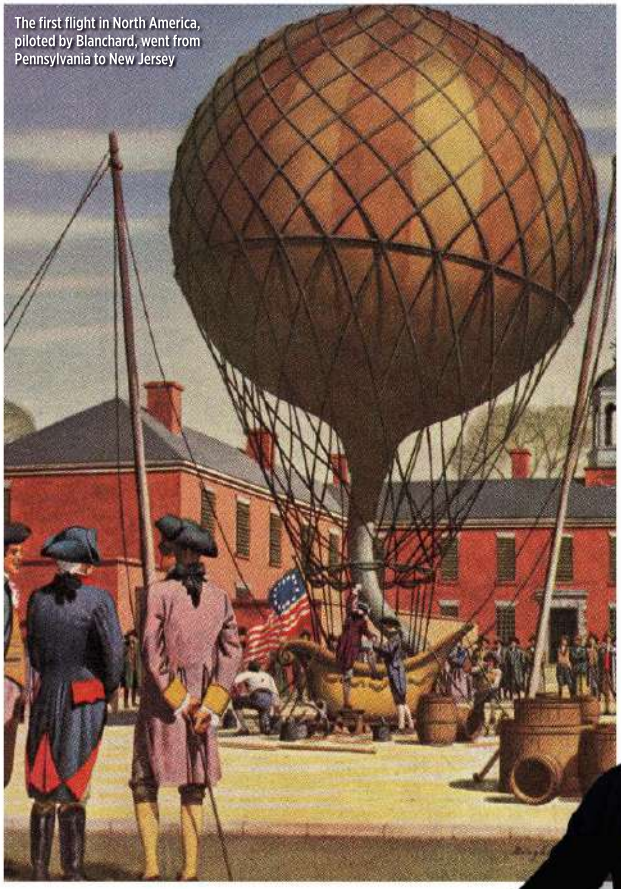
TOP RIGHT: **The duo's crossing of the Channel did not go to plan – the rudder and wings only served to make the balloon too heavy**

it to a landing site in Felmores Forest near Guines, where they were able to come back to earth safely by grabbing hold of branches on their way down. The flight had taken just two and a half hours, and ended with Blanchard and Jeffries met by excited onlookers, who luckily lent them some clothes.

There was one item they had kept their hands on when emptying the balloon's basket – a letter, which instantly became the first-ever airmail. Dressed again and recovered from their adventure, Blanchard and Jeffries had a hero's welcome in Paris as the first to cross the Channel by air. Blanchard, who received a reward and pension from a jubilant King Louis XVI, went on to tour Europe, and be the first to make a public flight in North America, which he did in front of the first US president, George Washington, in 1793.

After being beaten to the Channel crossing, de Rozier planned another attempt in the summer of 1785 going in the opposite direction, but he and his passenger were killed when their balloon crashed. It wouldn't be until 1906 that another successful balloon crossing would be made, three years before Louis Blériot flew over in an aeroplane.

As for Blanchard, his love of ballooning would ultimately be his downfall. In 1808, he had a heart attack during a flight and fell more than 50 feet. He died a year later from his injuries.



The first flight in North America, piloted by Blanchard, went from Pennsylvania to New Jersey

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BBC 100

EVERY MONTH THROUGHOUT 2022, WE'LL BE COMMEMORATING THE BBC'S 100TH BIRTHDAY WITH A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE...

1 January 1951

AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE ARCHERS

Radio drama *The Archers* begins its national run, after a number of pilot episodes are broadcast on the BBC Midlands Home Service the previous year. The longest-running daily serial in the world, the show – which boasts more than 5 million listeners each week – is set in the fictional English farming village of Ambridge. It remains one of the most popular programmes on BBC Radio 4, with more than 19,500 episodes aired to date.

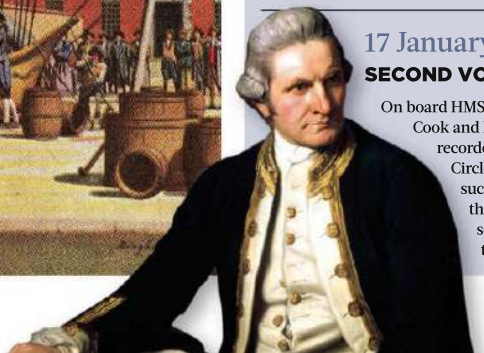
JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

A LOOK BACK AT OTHER EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN JANUARY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

8 January AD 871

ALFRED BEGINS HIS RISE TO GREATNESS

The future 'Great' Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred, helps his brother Æthelred lead the West Saxons to a decisive victory against a Viking army at the battle of Ashdown. A few months later, Æthelred dies suddenly and Alfred is declared king, despite having two young nephews closer in the line of succession.

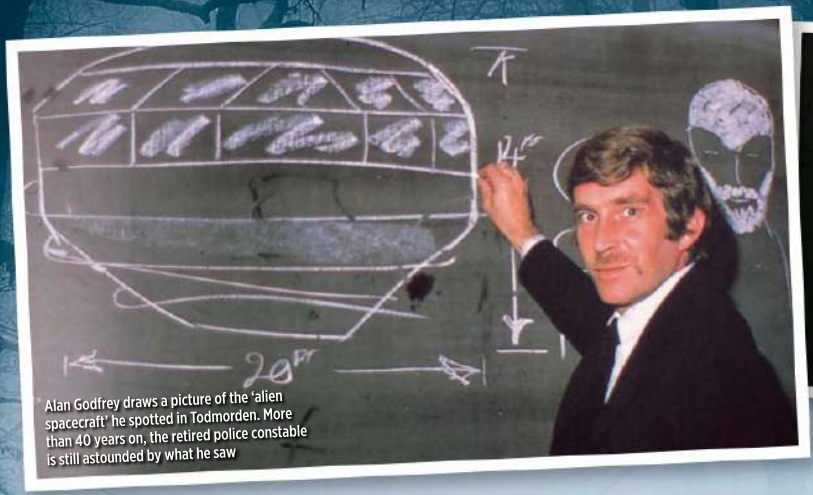


17 January 1773

SECOND VOYAGE OF COOK

On board HMS *Resolution*, Captain James Cook and his crew make the first recorded crossing of the Antarctic Circle. Though they don't succeed in reaching Antarctica, they have travelled farther south than anyone else in the world at that time.

In 1980, a police constable hit the headlines after a close encounter with a 'UFO'. But is there a logical explanation for what he saw? BBC Radio's **Danny Robins** investigates...



Alan Godfrey draws a picture of the 'alien spacecraft' he spotted in Todmorden. More than 40 years on, the retired police constable is still astounded by what he saw

Could Alan's sighting have been linked to the bizarre death of local miner Zigmund Adamski (*above*) a few months earlier?

It's the night of 28 November 1980. Margaret Thatcher is prime minister, the Cold War's in full effect, and police constable Alan Godfrey is out on patrol in his hometown, Todmorden, in West Yorkshire, on the trail of some cows spotted roaming a local housing estate. Various sightings have been reported, but the rogue herd eludes Alan. Then, at 5am, as he's about to finish his shift, he spots something strange... "My first thought was it was a double decker bus that had gone sideways," says Alan in his broad Yorkshire accent when I talk to him for my BBC Sounds podcast *Uncanny*. As he drives towards it, though, he realises he's looking at something unfamiliar. It appears to be a large flying object, hovering silently about five feet above the ground.

"It was approximately 20 feet wide," says Alan, "and 14 feet high, diamond in shape, spinning slowly anticlockwise, but the leaves and twigs on the ground were all swirling clockwise! Right weird!"

Right weird indeed... So begins one of the great British UFO mysteries. Alan reports his sighting to his superiors but word leaks out to a local newspaper, and it isn't long before the nation's press is writing about the 'Todmorden UFO'. It turns out there have been other sightings of flying objects in the area, and some of the newspapers draw links with another case Alan has investigated.

Earlier that year, he and a colleague had been called out to a body found on top of a coal heap at the local train station. It was a man named Zigmund Adamski, a 52-year-old coal miner, who'd died in bizarre circumstances. His hair had been cropped, he had burns on his scalp, a wound on his neck smeared in green gel, and he'd been dressed after death. Oddest of all, his body didn't have a single smudge of coal on it. It was almost as if he had been dropped from above. The look on Adamski's face has stuck with Alan to this day: "Have you ever heard the saying, 'he was frightened to death?'"

Now people join the dots. As fantastical as it seems, had Adamski been abducted by aliens, killed, and dropped onto the heap? Others wonder if the two incidents are linked by Cold War intrigue. Perhaps what Alan saw was a secret military prototype? Was Adamski a spy killed by the KGB? The rumour mill goes into overload, fuelled when a Russian UFO expert makes contact with Alan. Alan reports it to his bosses and pretty soon he's summoned by a "Man from the Ministry", who warns Alan not to talk about Adamski or his UFO encounter!

My investigation for *Uncanny* sparked a huge response from listeners. Many people contacted me to say they'd witnessed objects similar to what Alan saw, and, for some reason, the area around Todmorden appears to be a 'hot spot'. There are various theories as to why certain places attract these sightings, but so many questions remain. One thing we know for sure, though, was that the cows Alan was chasing did eventually turn up, inside a park with a firmly closed gate – almost as if they'd been dropped there...

DANNY ROBINS is a writer, broadcaster and journalist. He is the presenter of the BBC Radio 4 podcasts *The Battersea Poltergeist* and *Uncanny*, available now on BBC Sounds

LISTEN

You can hear Alan's full account, plus Danny's follow-up story about the case, in episodes 3 and 8 of *Uncanny*: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0010x7c*

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DISCOVER THE ETERNAL

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The Seven Years' War

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

The British and French utilised their colonial troops – including a young George Washington (*on horseback*) – in their struggle for global supremacy

Fearing a French invasion of his holdings in Hanover, King George II allied with Prussia

WHAT AND WHEN WAS THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR?

The Seven Years' War (1756–63) erupted from the latest in a long history of tensions between Britain and France as they each looked to exert their supremacy; it would have far-reaching and global repercussions. Fighting began in North America as a colonial struggle for control of the upper Ohio River Valley region, while in Europe the conflict centred on a territorial dispute between Prussia (Britain's ally) and Austria (France's ally) over the wealthy province of Silesia, modern-day Poland.

But as alliances came into play, the war pulled in all the major European powers and was fought around the world: not only in North America and Europe, but India, the Caribbean, West Africa, and the seas in between. That is why it is now considered the original world war.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

On one side of the conflict was a coalition led by Britain, including Prussia, Hanover (which was held by the British king, George II), Portugal and a handful of small German states. On the other side was France, Austria, Saxony, Sweden, Spain and Russia. In North America, both the British and French had allies among the Native American tribes.

DID THE WAR ACTUALLY LAST SEVEN YEARS?

Officially, the conflict lasted just under seven years: from Britain declaring war on France on 17 May 1756, to the Treaty of Paris on 10 February 1763. But hostilities had begun two years earlier in North America, with the British and French engaging in skirmishes and ambushes along the border of their territories. In the United States, the conflict is better known as the French and Indian War, and given a start date of 1754.

WHAT DID THE CONFLICT HAVE TO DO WITH THE EARLIER WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION?

The bitter end to the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48) – where Europe's major powers had fought for power and influence, using the succession of the Austrian Habsburg crown as a pretext – made it extremely likely that fighting would break out again before long. The issues that had led to the war remained unresolved, and few of the nations involved were satisfied with the terms of the peace treaty. To Austria's dismay, Prussia's conquest of Silesia was confirmed, something that further upset Russia, which did not like how powerful the Prussians were becoming.

This discontent led to drastic shifts in the networks of alliances across Europe, known as the 'Diplomatic Revolution' of 1756. Long-standing alliances were reversed – notably, Austria and Prussia swapped sides so that they became allies of France and Britain respectively – and new deals and agreements were made that destabilised the political situation in Europe. Austria and Prussia were soon on a war footing.

> "Alliances were reversed that destabilised the political situation. Austria and Prussia were soon on a war footing"

WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT OF THE WAR?

During the 1750s, the French had built a chain of forts in the Ohio River Valley in North America to challenge the British. They were in control of huge swathes of Canada and the Great Lakes area, while the British had the colonies on the eastern coast and were not ▶

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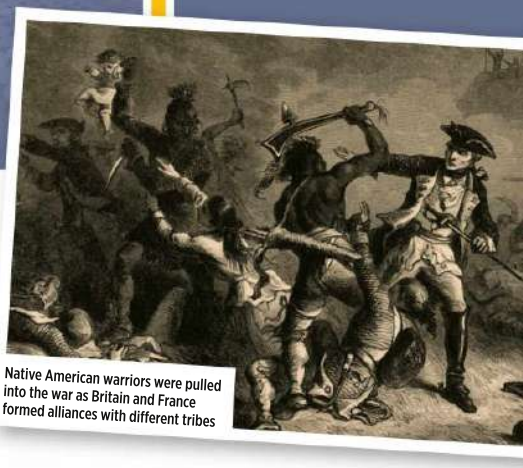

Native American warriors were pulled into the war as Britain and France formed alliances with different tribes

prepared to accept these enemy forts on their borders. In response, the Virginia governor dispatched a British colonial militia, headed by a young George Washington and accompanied by Native American warriors.

In May 1754, Washington and his force ambushed the French and built their own stronghold – Fort Necessity – although this was quickly attacked in retaliation and surrendered. While low-level engagements, these skirmishes caused both Britain and France to send troops to North America, setting off the chain of events that led to the declaration of war in 1756.

HOW DID THE WAR PROGRESS IN NORTH AMERICA?

In July 1755, before the war officially began, a British force under Major-General Edward Braddock attempted to capture the French Fort Duquesne, but was ambushed by French and Canadian troops and their Native American allies. Braddock perished in the disastrous defeat. France went on to secure a number of early victories by capturing Fort Oswego in 1756 and Fort William Henry in 1757.

But the British poured more resources into the colonial conflict than France, which was more preoccupied with the war in Europe, and the momentum shifted. In 1758, Major-General Jeffrey Amherst captured the French-controlled fortress of Louisbourg, in modern-day Nova Scotia, Canada, which opened up the St Lawrence River to British ships. This, in turn, allowed Major-General James Wolfe to sail warships to lay siege to Quebec. By sending his men up a narrow path up a cliff to the Plains of Abraham, Wolfe drew the French general Louis, marquis de Montcalm, into a fight and roundly defeated him.

With the capture of Quebec, the British capped off their so-called *Annus Mirabilis* ('miraculous year'). The French retreated to Montreal, but surrendered there in September 1760, all but sealing the British victory over New France in North America.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN EUROPE AT THE TIME?

While the British focused on attacking France in their colonial territories, the French looked to gain the advantage in Europe. In April 1756, France launched an attack on the British-controlled Mediterranean island of Minorca. As alliances were being formed and honoured, Britain's chief ally, King Frederick II of Prussia, saw this as an opportunity to invade Saxony, pre-empting Austria and Russia.

Soon, most of the states in Europe had been drawn into the conflict. Britain sent both troops and financial aid to its allies on the continent. Prussia found itself attacked from all sides, resulting in a number of crushing defeats but also some stunning victories for Frederick (such as against the French at Rossbach in November 1757).

France had also set its sights on Hanover – whose prince-elector was George II, king of Great Britain – and defeated a force of Hanoverian, as well as Prussian and Hessian, troops under the duke of Cumberland at Hastenbeck in July. The duke was forced to disband his forces and accept the occupation of Hanover. However, the British government refused to accept this surrender and were determined to send reinforcements.

> "With the capture of Quebec, the British capped off their so-called *Annus Mirabilis* ('miraculous year')"

The new Hanoverian commander, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick (who was himself Prussian), led a counter-offensive in 1758, initially driving the French back across the Rhine. In August 1759, Ferdinand's Anglo-German forces defeated the French and Saxons at the battle of Minden – an addition to Britain's *Annus Mirabilis* – having snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. Waves of British and Hanoverian infantry had got their orders confused and launched a potentially catastrophic assault on the French cavalry, but had managed to hold the enemy off regardless.

LEFT: The British capture Louisbourg – the beginning of the end for French Canada

RIGHT: The Prussian cavalry sweeps to victory over French and Imperial forces at the battle of Rossbach

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X4

ABOVE LEFT: **Under the leadership of Robert Clive (*seen with arms outstretched*), the British won a decisive victory in India at the battle of Plassey**

ABOVE RIGHT: **An engraving depicting the 1763 treaty signed between Prussia, Austria and Saxony at Hubertusburg**

Further victories were then won at Emsdorf, Warburg, Villinghausen and Wilhelmstahl, which served to prevent another French takeover of Hanover.

By 1761, the Prussians, Russians and Austrians were unable to launch major offensives as their forces had been severely depleted by five years of war. The French and British were also suffering with their own losses and colossal debts. No side could land the decisive blow to end the war, even when Spain entered the conflict in 1762 and attacked Portugal, which then became Britain's ally.

HOW DID INDIA BECOME INVOLVED IN THE WAR?

The end of the War of the Austrian Succession should have brought the fighting between Britain and France's respective Indian trading companies to a close, but this did not happen. Britain's 39th Regiment of Foot was deployed to India in 1754, and the outbreak of the Seven Years' War only served to heighten the hostilities. The Carnatic region in south India was conquered by British troops, and victory at the battle of Plassey in 1757 helped the British East India Company seize control of Bengal. The French capital in India, Pondicherry, was surrendered in 1761.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE CARIBBEAN AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD?

The supremacy of the British navy was crucial in the outcome of the war: blockading and capturing French ships and taking French and Spanish islands in the Caribbean. The British launched an attack in the West Indies, with Guadeloupe being the biggest prize in 1759, followed by Martinique in 1762. The port of Havana on the Spanish island of Cuba also fell under British control.

Britain's prime minister, William Pitt, was intent on destroying the French empire around the world. To that end, he even sent an expedition to capture the settlement of Saint-Louis in Senegal, followed by attacks on trading posts in the Gambia. France's presence in Africa was severely diminished.

HOW DID THE WAR END?

The Seven Years' War had dwindled into a stalemate and dragged on for so long that European armies were exhausted, with coffers empty and morale low. The British national debt alone had nearly doubled from £75 million to £133 million, while French debt rose from 1,360 million livres to 2,350 million. Various states were keen, if not desperate, to secure a peace, with both Russia and Sweden having signed treaties with Prussia by 1762. It was highly unlikely that either side would be able to claim final victory.

And so, the war finally ended with the Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 February 1763 with Britain and Hanover on one side and France and Spain on the other. Five days later, Prussia, Austria and Saxony signed their own peace, the Treaty of Hubertusburg. These two agreements actually saw much of the territory captured during the war returned and, in many ways, restored the situation that had existed before the fighting began. Austria left Silesia, while Prussia left Saxony.

Britain, however, made substantial gains, with France ceding all territory in North America east of the Mississippi River, along with many of its possessions in the Caribbean. Indian territories, too, were now firmly in British hands. Spain, thanks to an earlier secret treaty, received France's Louisiana territory and was able to take back both Havana and Manila (captured by the British in 1762), but was forced to relinquish Florida, which also went to Britain.

WHAT WERE THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE WAR?

Europe was left a different place. Prussia, which had been steadily growing in power, confirmed itself as one of the dominant players in Europe. Britain was on its way to global naval supremacy, as well as gathering a vast colonial empire that would become the envy of the world.

However, the debts incurred by the war would result in the British introducing damaging taxes, such as the Sugar Act of 1764 and infamous Townshend Acts of 1767. These would only encourage the American colonists to rebel and seek independence – something they would formally declare in 1776.

The signing of the Treaty of Paris, ending the Seven Years' War, is celebrated with a fireworks display in London's Green Park

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4 Misha Glenny explores the rise of Prussia in an episode of the BBC Radio 4 series *The Invention of Germany*: *bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0167zl1*

Catherine de Medici: the 'serpent queen'

A calculating murderer desperate for power, or nothing more than a devoted mother? **Dr Estelle Paranque** considers the life and actions of the much-maligned queen, and the lasting legacy of her bloodline

Catherine was born on 13 April 1519 to Lorenzo de Medici, ruler of Florence, and his wife Madeleine de La Tour d'Auvergne, and within three weeks she was an orphan. Her mother died from a violent fever, while her father, who was also the Duke of Urbino, sustained injuries defending the region from attack and died of his wounds, amid other disease complications.

Catherine's next guardian, her paternal grandmother Alfonsina Orsini, died in 1520, leaving the infant Catherine with her aunt Clarice de Medici. By 1527, the ruling Medicis had been overthrown by a faction opposed to Giulio de Medici (elected as Pope Clement VII in 1523), and Catherine was raised in several convents until a peace could be reached. At that point, Clement summoned her to live with him in Rome and cared for her until he could arrange her marriage to Henry, Duke of Orléans, the second son of King Francis I of France.

THE PATH TO POWER

Catherine and Henry were wed in October 1533, but their union was not a happy one. Queen consort from 1547, Catherine was devoted to her husband, but Henry II was in love with another woman: his favourite, Diane de Poitiers, who exercised enormous influence over him. Henry spent little time with his wife, and courtiers gossiped that she must be infertile (after all, Henry had fathered illegitimate children with his mistresses). And yet, it was actually Diane who helped the royal couple conceive. Worried that she could lose her influence at court if the king were to take a new wife, Diane made sure that Henry frequented Catherine's bedchamber; the queen was no threat to her, even if she gave birth to an heir. From 1544, Catherine and Henry had 10 children, seven of whom lived to adulthood.

But when Henry died in 1559, Catherine's situation at court changed in an instant. Having acted as regent while Henry was absent at the siege of Metz in 1552, she used this brief experience in her role as political advisor to her eldest son, Francis II. And although that situation did not last long before Francis died of illness on 5 December 1560, she was then made 'governor of France' following the accession of her next-oldest son, 10-year-old Charles IX. Despite Antoine de Bourbon, the king of Navarre, having been declared the 'official' regent, the arrangement was approved by parliament.

Catherine de Medici depicted with her husband, Henry II, who briefly allowed her to serve as regent while absent

Over the coming years, Catherine continued to build her own political power through her sons. When Charles IX was old enough to rule on his own, she took the title of 'queen mother of France', imposing herself on all governmental meetings and using the influence she had over her son to remain in control. She then repeated this strategy – though less successfully – with her next-oldest son, Henry III, who became king upon Charles' death in 1574.

Catherine's regency was marked by the French Wars of Religion, a period of conflict between Catholics and Huguenots (Protestants). Many urban legends depict Catherine, a Catholic, as a murderer who hated Protestants, but she worked hard to broker peace between the two sides, including marrying her daughter, Marguerite of Valois, to the Huguenot Henry of Navarre in 1572. The union did little to unite the two religions, and in the days following the wedding, an assassination attempt was made on Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, the military and political leader of the Huguenots. This sparked bloodshed across France, later known as the St Bartholomew's Day massacre.

Traditionally, the violence was believed to have been instigated by Catherine, despite no concrete evidence existing to confirm this. In fact, Catherine is known to have sent her own doctor to try and save Coligny, and opened her doors to Protestants in need of refuge.

A SLIPPERY CHARACTER?

During her time in power, Catherine was also criticised for her interests in astrology and astronomy, viewed with suspicion by those who regarded this as evidence of an association with the occult. Little by little, her detractors portrayed her as a 'serpent queen', poisoning her enemies and neglecting the people of France. While it is true that Catherine did plot and lie to protect her own authority and that of her sons, she did care deeply about the preservation of her country.

In September 1588, Catherine fell ill with a lung infection, with the situation in France at its worst. The authority of Henry III had been contested to the point that he had fled Paris. Still, he refused to listen to his mother's advice, and she could only watch while her son's power diminished. On 5 January 1589, Catherine died, probably of pleurisy.

From orphan to queen consort to queen mother, Catherine de Medici drastically influenced French history, producing three kings. Though the Valois dynasty did not survive after Henry III, her grandchildren went on to shape late 16th and 17th-century politics. In many ways, she was the grandmother of early modern Europe.

DR ESTELLE PARANQUE is a historian, author and academic. Her new book, *Blood, Fire, & Gold: The Story of Elizabeth I and Catherine de Medici* is due to be published by Ebury in June 2022

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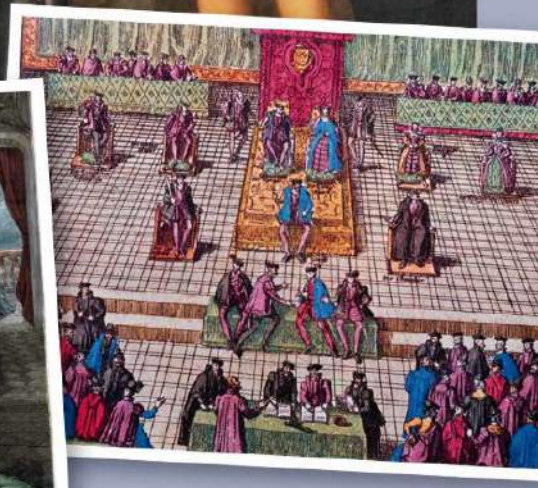
“Catherine took the title of ‘queen mother of France’ and used the influence she had over her sons to remain in power”



ABOVE: Catherine with four of her children. Three of her sons would become king, allowing her to maintain positions of influence

RIGHT: The queen’s fascination with astrology led her to become a keen supporter of the supposed prophecy maker, Nostradamus

FAR RIGHT: A colourised engraving of Charles IX on the throne, with his mother Catherine sat in a position of equal power next to him

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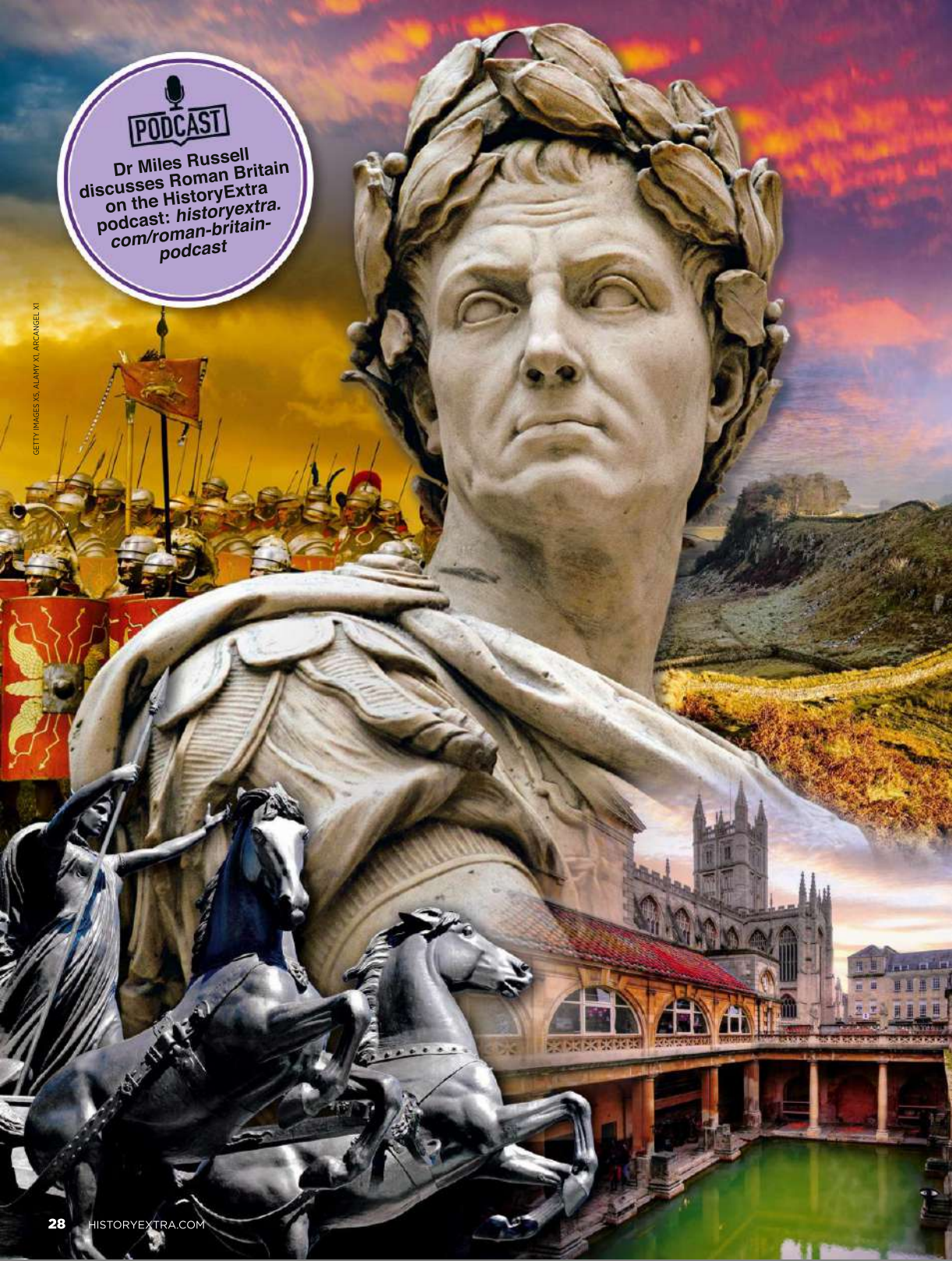
PODCAST
Dr Miles Russell discusses Roman Britain on the HistoryExtra podcast: historyextra.com/roman-britain-podcast
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YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

ROMAN BRITAIN

In AD 43, the fate of Britain was changed forever. After crossing the Channel, thousands of Roman soldiers landed on the southern coast and made their way inland. Before long, a huge portion of the island had been conquered, with the province of Britannia absorbed into the Romans' already sprawling empire.

With them, the invaders brought ingenious technology, exotic foods and even a new language – but not everyone welcomed them with open arms. As soon as the Romans arrived, tribes of native Britons rose up and attempted to fight back. Within a few decades, however, much of this dissent had been crushed, and Roman rule would prevail for generations to come.

In this month's Essential Guide, we'll be going on a journey through Roman Britain, delving into the experiences of the settlers who came to live in this strange, foreign land, and examining the fates of those they conquered. Guided along the way by Dr Miles Russell, we'll also be exploring stories of rebellion, religion and wall-building, while also attempting to understand why – after nearly 400 years of rule – Roman authority disintegrated.

We begin, however, with an overview of the key dates and events you need to know. Turn the page to get started...

30 The rise and fall of Roman Britain
A timeline of the key events during Britain's years under Roman rule

32 Everything you wanted to know about Roman Britain
Dr Miles Russell answers questions about everyday life in the province

36 Carving out new territory
How did the Romans conquer Britain and absorb it into their empire?

38 Britannia strikes back
Meet the rebels who tried to kick the Romans out: from Caratacus to Boudica

40 What did the Romans do for Britain?
From sophisticated road networks to modern farming techniques, we look at some of the Romans' most important innovations

44 Spreading the word of the Gods
The new rulers brought with them a new pantheon of deities to worship, too

46 A home from Rome
We take a peek inside Lullingstone Villa – a luxurious Roman dwelling

49 Rome's northern frontier
We explore the story of Hadrian's Wall: the formidable defensive barrier that separated Britannia from the unconquered tribes of Caledonia

52 The end of an era
Why did Roman rule eventually collapse in Britain?

DR MILES RUSSELL is a senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University. His books include *UnRoman Britain: Exposing the Great Myth of Britannia* (The History Press, 2010), written with Stuart Laycock.

THE RISE AND FALL OF ROMAN BRITAIN

55–54 BC

▼ Julius Caesar leads two invasions of Britain, but fails to capture the land.

AD 43

▼ Emperor Claudius begins the Roman conquest of Britain, and in late summer triumphantly enters the town of Camulodunum (Colchester).

AD 47

The settlement of Londinium (London) is founded. By the end of the century, it is established as the new capital of Roman Britain. By its height, in c120 AD, it will be home to around 45,000 people (the population will not swell to this size again until the 13th century).

AD 50

▼ Caratacus, a king of the Catuvellauni tribe in southern Britain, is taken captive after years of resistance to the Roman invaders.

AD 60–61

▶ Boudica, queen of the Iceni, launches an uprising that devastates Camulodunum, Londinium and Verulamium (St Albans). She is finally defeated at the battle of Watling Street.

c260 AD

▼ Britain becomes part of the breakaway Gallic empire (founded by Postumus, *right*) as a result of the Imperial Crisis, during which numerous nobles vie for the title of emperor. Britain is later reabsorbed into the Roman empire in AD 274.

c250 AD

Records show the first use of the word 'Picts' to describe the tribes of what is now northern Scotland. The word likely derives from the Latin term for 'painted people' – it is said they practise tattooing.

c211 AD

Britain is divided into two provinces: Britannia Superior and Britannia Inferior, with Londinium and Eboracum made their respective capitals. It is hoped that the move will make Britain easier to govern.

AD 193

▶ The 'Year of the Five Emperors' sees a quintet of rivals – including Britain's governor, Clodius Albinus (*right*) – embark on a battle for the imperial throne. Albinus is proclaimed emperor by his troops, only to be defeated by a rival in AD 197.

c286 AD

▼ Carausius, a naval commander, seizes control of the Roman fleet and embarks on a period of rule as emperor of Britain and northern Gaul.

AD 293

▲ Carausius is usurped by his treasurer, Allectus (*above*). He, in turn, is defeated by the real Roman emperor, Constantius.

AD 296

Britain is divided once again, but this time into four provinces: Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Flavia and Maxima Caesariensis.

AD 306

▼ Constantine (*below left*) is declared Roman emperor in York. Since AD 293, the empire has been ruled by four emperors under a system known as the 'Tetrarchy', but by AD 324, Constantine will have sole control.

AD 313

▶ The Edict of Milan gives Christianity legal status across the entire Roman empire. It is now tolerated by the imperial regime, along with other religions.

GETTY IMAGES X9, ALAMY X8

In the first century AD, the Romans founded a new province at the very edge of their empire: Britannia. We look back at the key events in its storied history...

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

AD 70s

Major legionary fortresses are established at the fringes of Roman Britain: Isca (now Caerleon, south Wales), Deva Victrix (Chester) and Eboracum (York). Each boasts a legion of around 4,000-5,000 soldiers.

AD 77

Gnaeus Julius Agricola, a celebrated Roman general who conquers large swathes of northern and western Britain, is appointed governor and consul of the nascent province.

AD 78

▼ The conquest of what is now Wales is completed. This includes the island of Mona (Anglesey), Britain's last major centre of druidism.

AD 79

▲ The civic centre of Verulamium is completed. With a forum, temples and assembly, it grows into one of Roman Britain's largest and wealthiest towns.

AD 182

Fierce fighting breaks out along Hadrian's Wall, and sees the tribes of Caledonia breaching the Romans' defences to carry out raids further south. Regular clashes will continue over the coming years.

AD 142

The Romans begin construction on a new fortification across northern Britain, between the Clyde and the Forth. Known today as the Antonine Wall (after Emperor Antoninus Pius), it remains in use for less than two decades before being abandoned.

AD 122

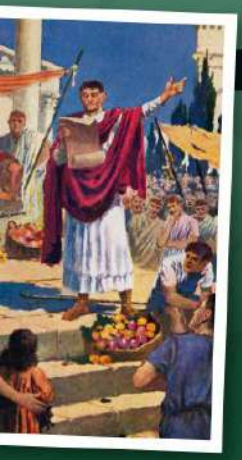
▼ Work begins on Hadrian's Wall – a 73-mile-long fortification that will serve as the empire's northern frontier. Today, its ruins span almost the entire width of England, between Newcastle and Carlisle.

AD 87

Partly in response to pressures elsewhere in the empire, the Romans decide to halt the conquest of the northernmost parts of Britain, leaving it to the native tribes. The fortress at Inchtuthil (in present-day Perth and Kinross), is abandoned.

c83–84 AD

▲ The Romans manage to defeat a confederacy of Caledonian tribes at the battle of Mons Graupius.



AD 367

The 'Great Barbarian Conspiracy' sees the Romans face near-simultaneous attacks by the Picts, Scots and Attacotti (native peoples from the British Isles), as well as the Franks and Saxons, who invade from the continent.

AD 369

The barbarians are eventually pushed out, but by now, three new non-Roman kingdoms have been established north of Hadrian's Wall. Any further attempts to gain control of what is now Scotland are abandoned.

AD 409

▼ Roman troops are gradually withdrawn to fight elsewhere in the empire. The Britons begin managing their own affairs.

AD 410

► Emperor Honorius (*right*) tells the Britons that they should "look to their own defences" after they request help against attacks from the Picts and the Saxons. Unable to sustain the province any longer, direct Roman rule comes to an end. ⊙

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ROMAN BRITAIN

Dr Miles Russell answers key questions about everyday life in Britain following the invasion of AD 43

Q: Who was living in Britain before the occupation, and what do we know about them?

A: There was a whole collection of different tribes, most of which we know very little about. What we do know about them comes from Roman histories, which are quite fragmentary, but they do give us the names of certain groups. In Dorset, for example, there were the Durotriges; in Kent, there were the Cantiaci; while Berkshire was home to the Atrebates. But although we know their names, it's very difficult to know what being part of a tribe actually meant at this time – how each was organised, the customs they followed, and so on. We know there were ruling parties and aristocratic elites in Iron Age Britain, and that there were probably farmers and taxpayers and other individuals who were protected by them. But pre-Roman Britain was a real patchwork of different tribes, clans and groups, with no central authority at all.

The major disadvantage of trying to understand Iron Age societies from a historical point of view is that they didn't write things down. We'd love to get their perspective on things and what they really thought about the Romans; instead, we just have a very one-sided, rather negative view of them, written by the Romans who tried to portray Britons as painted barbarians with horse urine in their hair, who married their sisters. This is the kind of information that the Romans used to demonise and stigmatise their enemies, but it's not a very objective account about everyday life in Britain before they arrived.

Q: What written sources do we have from the period, and what do they tell us?

A: There are lots of nice big inscriptions, of course, but these don't tell us very much; they were created as monumental propaganda statements that really just tell us the names of particular emperors and when something was built. As far as the actual population itself goes, there is relatively little in the way of written sources. Roman administrators in Britain would have been literate and would have written things down, but the circumstances of preservation for that are actually quite rare.

There are some unique examples, though. Several hundred writing tablets – wafer-thin slivers of wood covered with ink writing – have been found at Vindolanda, just south of Hadrian's Wall, which tell us a great deal about life on the northern frontier. Most of them are lists: shopping lists and information about who was on sentry duty etc. But every so often we get more personal information, such as an invite from the wife of one of the fort commanders to the wife of another commander, asking her to come to her birthday party. On another tablet, a soldier is writing home, asking for socks and underpants. These are small flashes of light in which we can see the real people of Roman Britain; they're amazing, but also very rare.

A birthday invitation sent by Claudia Severa, the wife of a Roman commander, around AD 100. The tablet is among hundreds to have been found at Vindolanda Roman Fort, Northumberland

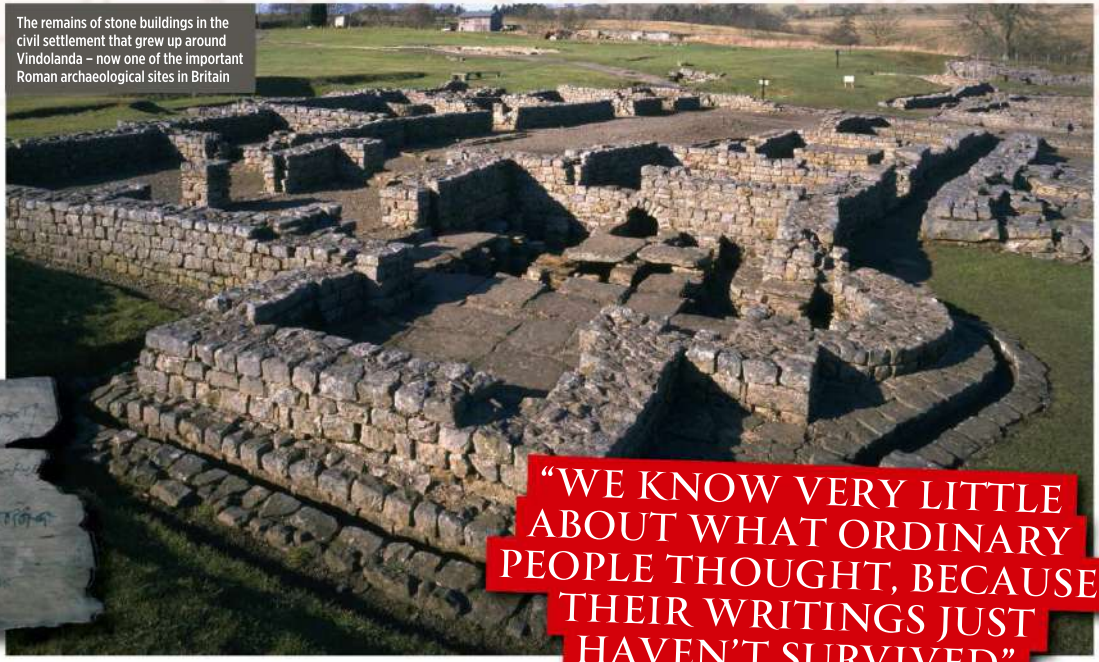
In Bath, small sheets of lead or pewter, cast into the hot springs to the Roman goddess Sulis Minerva, have been found – so-called curse tablets on which people inscribed their prayers for revenge on those who had wronged them. Among the many curses is a tablet wishing for a stolen bronze vessel to be "filled with the blood of the thief". Another, by an individual named Docimedis, hopes that the person who has stolen his two gloves "lose[s] his mind and his eyes".

Here, again, we can see real people with real hopes, dreams and aspirations. But other than these rare examples, we know very little about what ordinary people thought, because their writings just haven't survived.

BELOW LEFT: **Maiden Castle, Dorset – one of the largest Iron Age hillforts in Britain. Unfortunately, we know very little about the lives of the people who built it**

BELOW: **Gold coins used by the Atrebates tribe, who lived in what is now Berkshire. Pre-Roman Britain was home to multiple groups and clans, with no central authority**

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2, DR MILES RUSSELL



The remains of stone buildings in the civil settlement that grew up around Vindolanda – now one of the important Roman archaeological sites in Britain

"WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT WHAT ORDINARY PEOPLE THOUGHT, BECAUSE THEIR WRITINGS JUST HAVEN'T SURVIVED"

Q: Are there any Roman roads left in Britain?

A: Before the arrival of the motorway, most of Britain's A-roads were based on the Roman layout. Roads like Stane Street [linking Londinium (London) to Noviomagus Reginorum (Chichester)] and Ermine Street [linking Londinium to Lindum Colonia (Lincoln) and Eboracum (York)] were followed in the medieval and modern era. It was only with the introduction of the motorway, where new roads connected up with new towns, that the Roman network disappeared. Where you see very straight sections of road on Ordnance Survey maps, those might well be Roman originals that have been overlain, but today's road network really isn't based on the Roman system at all.

Q: Did the Romans bring the concept of the pub with them?

A: Regarding alcohol consumption, we don't know what people did in pre-Roman periods; there's lots of later literature about Celtic societies feasting and drinking (which seems to have often led to fighting and killing), so there does seem to have been quite a lot of drinking in pre-Roman Britain. But as to the Romans themselves, yes, there is evidence that they had bars and small drinking establishments in Britain.

Q: Did the Romans plant grapevines in Britain?

A: In the third century AD, Britain's climate seems to have been quite warm, and there is some evidence in a number of villages in the south and west to suggest viticulture – the planting of vines. So yes, it seems that they may have produced wine.

The Romans certainly imported a lot of wine, however. We see *amphorae* – big wine storage vessels from the Mediterranean – coming into Britain right the way through the first, second and third centuries AD, indicating that what they couldn't produce themselves, they had shipped in. If wine was being produced in any vast quantities here, though, it wouldn't have been particularly great, and certainly wouldn't have been comparable to what was being made in the Mediterranean.

Q: Did the Romano-British lose their Roman culture?

A: When we look at Britain, the people who retained Roman culture are those who came from other parts of the Roman empire – the business elites, the wealthy, and so on. Some Britons certainly bought into that system, but that luxury economy was breaking down by about the AD 360s/370s; suddenly we can see ▶

A tarmac-covered stretch of Roman road near the Old Sarum Iron Age hillfort in Wiltshire. Much of the Romans' original road layout has been lost, however

The Romans imported wine from the Mediterranean in huge vessels known as *amphorae* – an example of which can be seen in the centre of this relief image

"THE AVERAGE PERSON IN A TOWN OR VILLA IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WOULD HAVE HAD NO IDEA WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THEM"

Reenactors 'man' the reconstructed Arbeia Roman Fort in Tyne and Wear. Once they had conquered Britain during the first century AD, soldiers turned their attentions to the northern frontier

ABOVE: **Coins from Northumberland's Corbridge Hoard. Frequent changes in emperors meant that the faces shown on Roman currency wouldn't have stayed the same for long**

ABOVE CENTRE: **A replica gravestone at Vindolanda. In reality, most people – at least in the first century AD – were cremated, rather than buried**

ABOVE LEFT: **Evidence of Roman lead mining activity can still be seen at Ubley Warren in Somerset**

◀ all signs of wealth disappearing. So, somewhere between about AD 360–380, there was a catastrophic economic collapse in Britain, and that was the period where anyone who was holding on to Roman culture probably left, or adapted and changed their ways. The golden age of Roman Britain, as far as culture goes, was the fourth century AD – but by the end of that century, it had disappeared, almost overnight.

Q: What would you say was the most important role for Roman soldiers in Britain?

A: It depends what period we're looking at. In the beginning, of course, the Roman troops were very good at killing; that was their primary objective. Having done that and conquered Britain, they then set about creating the infrastructure.

In the first century AD, roads and forts were built, and the Roman army made the choice to turn pre-existing tribal areas into one functioning province. Moving into the second and third centuries, that building had been completed, and the Roman military's role, essentially, was to protect the new frontier: everything from York up to Newcastle and Carlisle was controlled by the army. In the south, there were villas and temples and towns, while the west had mining areas, but the north was a massive, militarised zone, whose primary objective was to protect all of Rome's civilian investments.

Q: How much did the average Briton know about what was going on in Italy?

A: I suspect the average person would have known very little. They would have seen names and faces changing on coins every so often; in part of the third century AD, there was a new emperor every six months to a year, so I think they would certainly have been aware that the economy was suffering from the power struggles taking place in Italy. The Roman army in the north would have had a better idea as to who their leader was; in some cases, they actually contributed to changes in command, because, in the third and fourth centuries, we see several Romano-British leaders actually being promoted to the rank of emperor and then taking soldiers out to fight.

But I think the average person in a town or a villa in the countryside would have had absolutely no idea who was in charge of them. They would have been aware that there was an emperor, but he was a very long way away and of little significance day-to-day.

Q: How unusual was it for a woman like Boudica to have held a position of power in Iron Age Britain?

A: Roman sources do mention the fact that, in Britain, men and women held equal status, and they viewed that as odd. Rome at this time was a very patriarchal society, so a female war leader like Boudica taking tribes into battle and organising military campaigns would have seemed very strange to them. The Britons, as far as we can see, thought it perfectly normal for men and women to rule equally, though.

Q: How many people settled in Britain from elsewhere in the empire?

A: It's very hard to say. We have tombstone information, of course, and we can see from looking at the army at the northern frontier that it contained Syrians, North Africans, Iraqi boatmen – there was a great cultural mix of people up there. I suspect in southern Britain, the majority of administrators would have come from Italy, or the south of France or Spain. And probably quite a lot of the people living in villas would have hailed from other parts of the Roman empire. But there are no official records, so we ultimately don't know.

Where we have tombstone evidence, it's quite surprising to see how far some people came. Although there were probably not that many people travelling from Rome itself, there were quite a lot from Italy and Spain and the central Mediterranean who came to Britain in an official capacity. There were probably very few people born in Britain itself who benefited from the invasion, or who went on to get great administrative posts.

Q: Has work been done to ascertain the extent to which Roman DNA is a part of the modern population mix in Britain?

A: Work has started, but one of the major problems is that, in the first century AD, most Roman cemeteries were cremation cemeteries, so we don't have a lot of bone data to work with.

Isotope and DNA analysis of people from this period is still in its infancy, but we are getting some quite interesting information, nonetheless. For example, when analysed, it's been determined that quite a lot of individuals who we thought were Romano-Britons actually came from places like Ethiopia or Algeria and Tunis. There is a real sense that Roman Britain was a great genetic mix, but quite how deep that mix was remains to be seen.

DR MILES RUSSELL is a senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University. He has authored more than 15 books and is a regular contributor to TV and radio, including *Digging for Britain* and *Time Team*

A 19th-century image depicts Boudica addressing her fellow Britons in AD 60. Before the invasion, native British men and women had enjoyed equal status

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X2

CARVING OUT NEW TERRITORY

Caesar may have laid the foundations for the Roman invasion of Britain, but it was Claudius who came, saw and conquered

The Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43 wasn't the empire's first foray onto British soil. Almost a century earlier, Julius Caesar made two expeditions to the mysterious, tribal island. The first, in 55 BC, couldn't genuinely be described as an invasion. Commanding just two legions, Caesar hoped to score a major propaganda victory by crossing the Channel, even if he painted the expedition as a mere act of revenge against the Gaul-supporting Britons. "In almost all the wars with the Gauls," he would later write, "succours had been furnished to our enemy from that country."

After spying the massed forces of Britons on the cliffs above Dover, the small fleet opted for an open beach further along the coastline. However, heavy storms forced the Roman cavalry reinforcements, sailing in the wake of the initial party, back to Gaul (a region comprising modern-day France, parts of Belgium, western Germany, and northern Italy). Caesar and his men soon retreated across the Channel, too, regrouping in readiness for another assault the following year.

Cassivellaunus, chieftain of the Catuvellauni tribe, made peace with Julius Caesar after the latter's invasion of Britain in 54 BC

The campaign of 54 BC was more successful. Caesar learned from his mistakes, assembling a much larger taskforce, one numbering five legions and a 2,000-strong cavalry. Landing unopposed, the Romans were too strong for the Britons and soon advanced across the Thames, after which they were approached by the Trinovantes, a tribe whose leader had recently been overthrown by the warlord Cassivellaunus. The Trinovantes offered aid and provisions to the invaders, as did other tribes. In return, Caesar restored the Trinovantes' exiled leader Mandubracius as king and forced Cassivellaunus to surrender. Assured by the latter that no second coup would occur, Caesar – along with every last one of his soldiers – left Britain and travelled back to Gaul.

Decades of relative harmony between Britain and the Roman empire followed, with a number of new client kingdoms set in place. These states were ruled by local tribes who had aligned with Rome; under this system, military occupation by Roman legions wasn't required.

By AD 40, though, the political landscape of Britain had become significantly more volatile. Led by Caratacus, the Catuvellauni tribe had overthrown the Trinovantes as the rulers of southern England's most powerful kingdom, simultaneously banishing any Roman-sympathetic tribes into exile. That year, Caligula instructed some of his legions to practise military manoeuvres on the beaches of Gaul ahead of an apparent invasion of Britain, but this most unpredictable of emperors never ordered the campaign's commencement. Three years later though, Caligula's successor – his uncle Claudius – did just that.

COMING IN TO LAND

Not only did Claudius wish to restore, and even expand, Roman influence in Britain but, suffering from poor public opinion in Rome, he also understood how a military victory could greatly improve his standing. One of Rome's most venerable senators, Aulus Plautius, was placed in charge of the invasion, an ambitious campaign drawn up on the pretext of simply reinstating Verica, the exiled Atrebates king.

There is a difference of opinion among historians as to where the invasion forces

Julius Caesar had previously attempted to invade Britain during the first century BC (*above*), but it was an effort led by Claudius (*right*) nearly 100 years later that was ultimately successful

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X5

landed in AD 43. Some reports mention Kent's east coast, while others favour a spot close to Noviomagus Reginorum, aka latter-day Chichester. (Indeed, to this day, an area of Chichester Harbour is still known as Roman Landing.) As the invaders landed in three divisions, both accounts could be correct, of course.

After offering stiff resistance at the two-day battle of the Medway near Rochester, the Britons retreated to the Thames and further beyond into the Essex marshes, pushed back by the Romans' momentum. Plautius, though, chose to reduce the intensity while he awaited the arrival of Claudius to enjoy the triumph soon to come. Once the emperor reached Britain, the beleaguered Britons, represented by 11 different tribes, surrendered without any further loss of life. Claudius was gifted the victory and returned home to bask in the glory.

His troops, meanwhile, continued into the interior, pushing on in both westerly and northerly directions. The future emperor Vespasian was in command of the legions heading west and made steady progress as far as Exeter. The story was similar for those marching north. Within four years of the initial invasion, the Romans had total control of the southern half of England, from the Bristol Channel to the Humber.

Resistance to Roman incursions both further north and into Wales saw minimal territorial gains – minimal ambition, in actuality – until Nero's ascendancy to the emperorship in AD 54. Under the determined new governor Quintus Veranius, and his successor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, large swathes of Wales fell under Roman control.

VENTURING NORTH

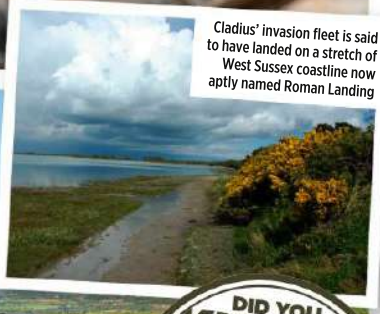
The resilience of the Boudica-led resistance in AD 60–61 may have ultimately failed to expel the Romans, but the latter's expansionist ambitions were certainly put on hold while they dealt with the uprising in the southeast – and while they rebuilt their strongholds of Camulodunum (Colchester), Verulamium (St Albans) and Londinium (London), which Boudica's rebels had successfully razed to the ground.

The conquest of Wales and northern England was complete by AD 80, after which there were also successful Roman incursions into Scotland. These were short-term advances, though, with legions required to relocate overseas to quash rebellions elsewhere in the empire. The result of this was that Scottish tribes reclaimed their territory and that Hadrian's Wall, on which work began in AD 122, would represent the northern frontier of Roman-held Britain.

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

A bust of Vespasian in Bath. The future emperor was responsible for expanding Roman territory into the west of Britain

"WITHIN FOUR YEARS, THE ROMANS HAD CONTROL FROM THE BRISTOL CHANNEL TO THE HUMBER"



Cladius' invasion fleet is said to have landed on a stretch of West Sussex coastline now aptly named Roman Landing

DID YOU KNOW?

PACHYDERM POWER

The Romans are believed to have used war elephants while consolidating their rule on British soil. The smell of the animals was known to drive enemy horses mad, rendering the Britons' chariot-riding skills useless.

An aerial view of Caerleon, south Wales, where the Romans established a fortress around AD 75. The circular foundations of an amphitheatre, built adjacent to the site, are still clearly visible

BRITANNIA STRIKES BACK

Guy de la Bédoyère explores five stories of men and women who rebelled against Roman rule in Britain

A modern image depicts Caratacus attending a tribunal in Rome, having been captured by Claudius' soldiers in Britain. Remarkably, the tribal leader was pardoned

CARATACUS

Caratacus of the powerful Catuvellauni tribe had the time of his life giving the invading Roman army a monumental run-around.

In AD 43 when the emperor Claudius' troops landed in Britain, Caratacus was one of the surviving sons of the deceased king Cunobelinus. Caratacus and his brother Togodumnus led the British resistance from the tribal heartlands directly north of the Thames, and fought against the Romans in battle – probably on the Medway in Kent – which they lost. Soon after, Togodumnus was dead, and Caratacus was left on his own.

But Caratacus refused to kowtow to the enemy. He spurned the idea of becoming a 'client king' and ruling his tribe for the Romans. Instead, he took the war west and headed for the Silures tribe in what is now south Wales.

Caratacus managed the remarkable feat for a British tribal leader of organising other tribes under his leadership. He pulled back further into the impenetrable hills and valleys of western Britain and secured a stronghold on high ground. However, in AD 50, the Romans arrived for battle and overwhelmed the Britons with their firepower. Caratacus fled north for sanctuary with Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes, but she handed him over to the enemy. Caratacus was pardoned by Claudius and pensioned off in ignominious retirement in Rome.

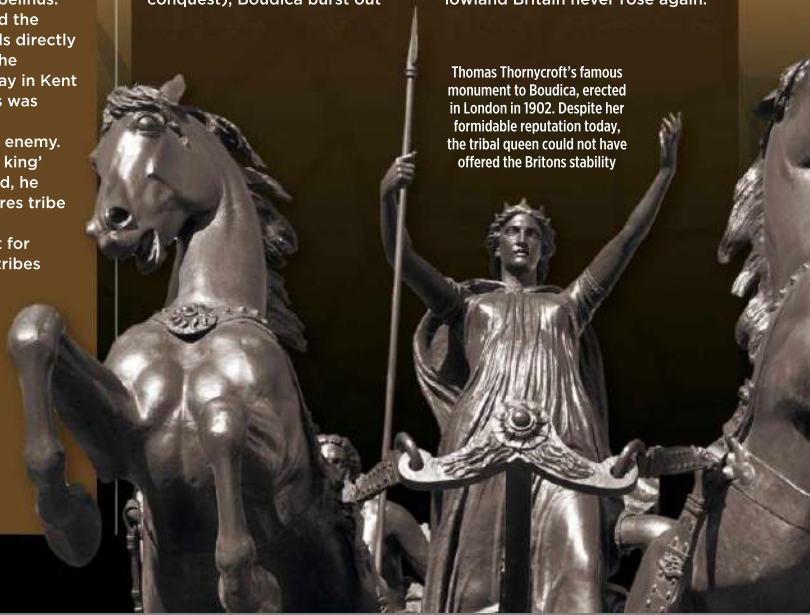
BOUDICA

Boudica of the Iceni has always been the most famous rebel of Roman Britain. Her husband was Prasutagus, a tribal ruler who agreed to become a client king of the Romans and thus hold onto his kingdom. But when he died in AD 60, Roman officials moved in to steal his estate, flogging Boudica and raping the couple's daughters.

Seeking vengeance, Boudica went to war, rounding up her tribe and the aggrieved neighbouring Trinovantes. Catching the Roman army and the governor Suetonius Paulinus by surprise (he was in Mona, now Anglesey, wiping out the druids who had organised the local resistance to the Roman conquest), Boudica burst out of East Anglia. She destroyed three Roman towns (Colchester, London and St Albans) before Paulinus eventually caught up and defeated her.

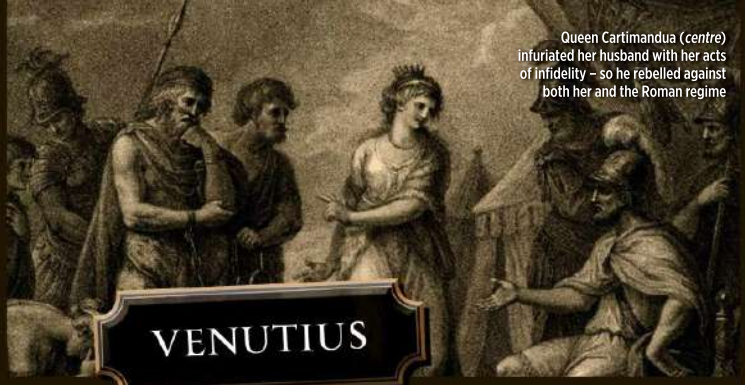
The trouble is that we only have two Roman accounts of Boudica, and they were both written long after the events. Neither Tacitus nor Dio had ever seen her. They wrote her up as the complete opposite of the effete and decadent emperor Nero, and were not even certain how she died (either 'sickness' or 'suicide').

The sad truth is that Boudica – no matter how she is depicted today – had nothing to offer the Britons except disorder and starvation. No wonder, then, that lowland Britain never rose again.



Thomas Thornycroft's famous monument to Boudica, erected in London in 1902. Despite her formidable reputation today, the tribal queen could not have offered the Britons stability

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X5



Queen Cartimandua (*centre*) infuriated her husband with her acts of infidelity – so he rebelled against both her and the Roman regime

VENUTIUS

When the Romans invaded in AD 43, rulers of several British tribes decided that their long-term interests would be better served with Roman backing. Among these was Cartimandua, ruling queen of the Brigantes tribe in northern England, and her husband and consort, Venutius.

In AD 51, Cartimandua, who had come to power around the time of the Roman invasion, handed Caratacus, leader of the Catuvellauni tribe – who had fled to her for refuge – to Emperor Claudius. Venutius seems to have been onside, at least until this point, but then the couple split.

Bumped up by Roman subsidies, Cartimandua became increasingly self-important and Venutius and his supporters took exception to this. But the real insult came when the Brigantian queen began an affair with her armourer, Vellocatus. Cartimandua's regime went into meltdown, while Venutius rounded up ever more support from the Brigantes, who began to turn against their overmighty queen.

Venutius was now a rebel by default, and in AD 69 the Roman governor Bolanus had to extract Cartimandua from the tribe before she was killed; his forces fought Venutius several times before they got her to safety. But Venutius had only a short time to enjoy his success. In AD 71, a new governor called Cerealis arrived, and within a few years Brigantian territory had been absorbed into the Roman province. And Venutius? He disappeared without trace, as did Cartimandua.

CARAUSIUS

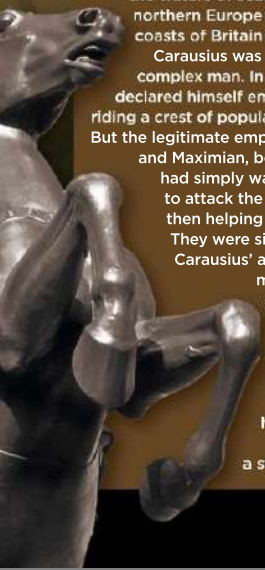
Carausius rose from total obscurity through the ranks of the Roman army to be given command of the Roman fleet in Britain in the AD 280s. He was charged with clearing the waters of seaborne raiders from northern Europe who plagued the coasts of Britain and Gaul.

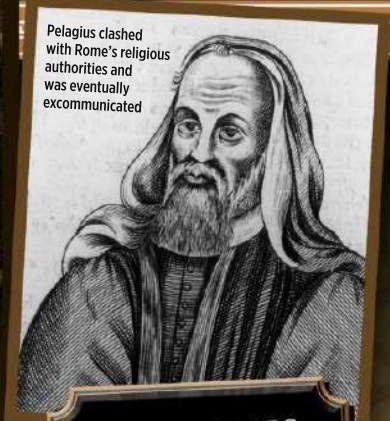
Carausius was an extraordinarily complex man. In AD 286 or 287 he declared himself emperor in Britain, riding a crest of popularity for his success. But the legitimate emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, believed Carausius had simply waited for the raiders to attack the settlements, before then helping himself to their loot. They were simply astounded by Carausius' audacity, and even more stunned when he claimed to be their imperial colleague, issuing a coin with a portrait of all three and the legend 'Carausius and his Brothers'.

But Carausius went a step further. He issued the best-quality silver coins for generations, which – in Roman terms – were synonymous with legitimacy. And he even had the chutzpah to claim that he was in the process of restoring the 'Golden Age of Augustan Rome' (albeit in Britain), quoting from Virgil to prove it.

It couldn't last, and it didn't. In AD 293 he was murdered in a coup and replaced by his finance minister, Allectus, who was then killed by an imperial army sent over the Channel.

Carausius declared himself emperor in the late third century AD and even minted his own coins. In reality, he was a naval general, with no claim to rule





Pelagius clashed with Rome's religious authorities and was eventually excommunicated

PELAGIUS

By the time Pelagius was born in Britain or Ireland in the late AD 300s, the Roman empire was ruled by orthodox Christian emperors. The prevailing dogma, most enthusiastically promoted by Saint Paul and Saint Augustine, was that only the 'elect' would find a place in heaven. It did not matter how good or religious you were.

Pelagius was a Christian theologian, but he was infuriated by the injustice that one could do nothing to improve one's chances of going to heaven. As a Briton he was more in tune with the pagan tradition of being able to intercede with the gods to influence one's destiny.

The central part of Pelagius' teaching was the gift of free will: that one could choose to do good and earn a place in heaven, or not. He started teaching this. Augustine was apoplectic with rage, resorting to hurling bile at Pelagius and denouncing him as a wrecker.

Pelagius would not be thwarted, and he set out from Britain to spread his views across the late Roman empire. But the forces of orthodoxy were having none of it. By AD 418 he had been excommunicated and denounced as a heretic. He disappeared after that, but Pelagianism proved resilient and clung on for decades. ⊙

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WHAT DID THE ROMANS DO FOR BRITAIN?

Not everyone may have welcomed them with open arms, but the Romans certainly left their mark on British culture and society

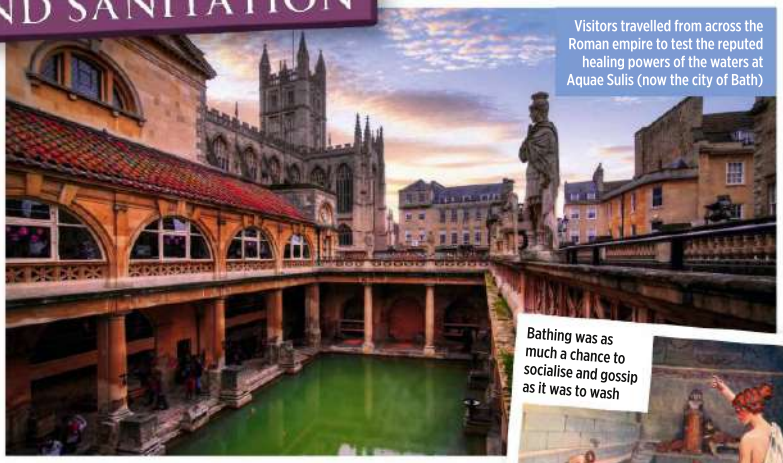
PLUMBING AND SANITATION

Where would we be without baths, running water and toilets? While access to such facilities is still sadly lacking in parts of the world today, the first drainage and sanitation systems in Britain were introduced by the ancient Romans.

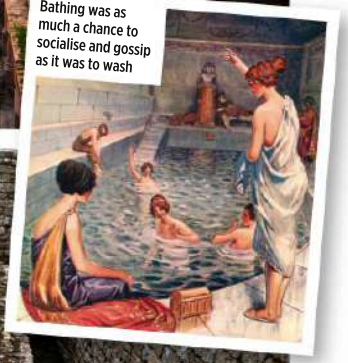
At the heart of these systems was the aqueduct. While not as elaborate as the colossal stone structures erected in Rome and elsewhere, these wooden channels enabled fresh water from streams and springs to flow into towns and cities. Complementing the aqueducts were sewers, which carried away dirty water and were hidden beneath the streets. 'Flushing' toilets could also be found, too: at Housesteads Roman Fort in Northumberland, waste from the latrines was washed along a channel by rainwater.

Bathhouses were also important to the Romans. As well as a way to keep clean, they served as social hubs, where locals could catch up with gossip. Typically, a session at the baths would start with a trip to the *tepidarium*, a warm pool where the bathing ritual began, followed by a stint inside the *calderium*, which was like the hot tub of today. Finally, bathers would brace themselves for a dip in the chilly *frigidarium*, which closed their freshly cleansed pores. To heat the bathhouse, each of the rooms was constructed on top of a series of brick and tile pillars, which enabled hot air from a nearby furnace to circulate beneath the floors – an innovation known as a *hypocaust* system.

In some instances, the Romans adapted existing facilities used by the Britons. In what is now Bath, southwest England, locals had been visiting the area's natural hot springs long before the Romans arrived, primarily to worship the goddess of healing, Sulis. But after the invasion, the Romans adopted the springs to worship one of their own goddesses – Minerva – leading to the birth of the hybrid deity Sulis Minerva. The area was then named Aquae Sulis, with a temple and bathhouse built around the springs.



Visitors travelled from across the Roman empire to test the reputed healing powers of the waters at Aquae Sulis (now the city of Bath)



Bathing was as much a chance to socialise and gossip as it was to wash

The communal latrines at Housesteads Roman Fort still 'flush' when it rains today

GETTY IMAGES X6 ALAMY X3

ABOVE: Although it was known to the Romans as Corinium Dobunnorum, the 'cester' in Cirencester's modern name reflects its history as the site of a Roman *castrum* (fort)

MAIN: A portion of the historic Fosse Way near Cirencester. Built in the first and second centuries AD, the roads connected Isca (Exeter) and Lindum Colonia (Lincoln)

LATIN

Have you ever said "carpe diem" (seize the day) to somebody? If you have, then you have the Romans to thank for that.

Another legacy that the Romans have left in Britain is Latin. Although it is not spoken today, traces of the language still exist within modern English, and within certain place names. For instance, towns and cities ending in 'chester', 'caster' and 'cester' can trace the origins of their names to the Anglo-Saxon word 'ceaster', which is itself derived from the Roman word for fort – *castrum*.

Although Latin was the official language of the Roman empire and used across government, trade and law, not all native Britons were willing to learn it – some people, particularly in rural areas, clung on to their Celtic tongue.

ROADS

All roads lead to Rome – or at least they did in the continental Roman empire. But although the roads the Romans built in mainland Britain may not have been capable of crossing the Channel, they certainly did connect disparate parts of the island in new ways.

The impetus for roadbuilding began shortly after the invasion, when it became apparent that the existing infrastructure would not be sufficient for transporting large numbers of troops across the province. Instead, the invaders set about replacing the existing dirt paths with solid stone and gravel tracks, measuring between five and 10 metres in width. And to ensure that the roads were straight and therefore as direct as possible, surveyors used a tool known as a *groma*, resembling a wooden cross with four arms positioned at right angles.

Eventually, Britain came to boast one of the world's most sophisticated road networks, stretching from the ports of the south coast to Hadrian's Wall – some 10,000 miles of infrastructure in total. Of these roads, Watling Street was one of the most important, linking Portus Dubris (Dover) and Londinium (London) with Viroconium (Wroxeter). Today, the A5 follows much of the same route.

DID YOU KNOW?

CAPITAL GAINS

The area that makes up modern-day central London consisted of just a few farms along the Thames when the Romans arrived. They made it into one of the greatest cities of the empire, with a central forum larger than Trafalgar Square.

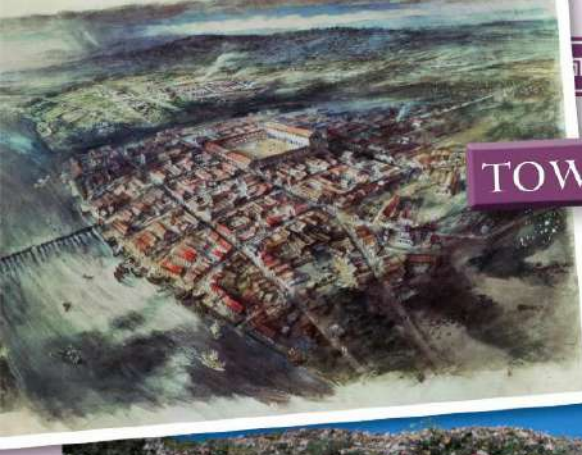
FOOD

Many foods that are today considered staples of British cuisine were actually introduced by the Romans – from onions to the humble apple. And even though the Romans weren't responsible for introducing chickens to Britain, it was they who first popularised their meat as a form of sustenance. Indeed, the Romans brought with them many delicacies and flavours from across the empire, livening up a native diet that mainly consisted of porridge, stews and bread.

In order to help their foods flourish, the Romans began to employ agricultural methods that they had first perfected in the Mediterranean, such as crop rotation and land drainage. New farming techniques also came in useful when it came to setting up vineyards, which allowed the Roman arrivals to keep their thirst at bay and save money on importing wine from home.

Much like today, hosting dinners and parties was a popular pastime, and soon the Romano-British elite were showcasing their wealth with lavish banquets that lasted long into the night. But one thing that wouldn't last in Britain was the Romans' love of eating snails, or more specifically a large species known as the *helix pomatia*, which were fattened up with a diet of milk. Interestingly, descendants of these creatures can still be found living at Chedworth Roman Villa in Gloucestershire today.

TOWN AND CITY PLANNING



LEFT: **An artist's depiction of Londinium in around AD 125. The forum is visible in the centre of the image, while the first London Bridge can also be seen to the left**

BELOW: **Colchester's Balkerne Gate – the largest surviving Roman gateway in Britain**

Before the Roman invasion, Britons mainly lived in scattered tribal villages and forts – there were no big cities. But the new arrivals soon changed that, constructing metropolises out of bricks and mortar.

The largest of these were Londinium (London), Camulodunum (Colchester) and Verulamium (St Albans), which were built on a grid system, with each of the blocks known as *insulae*. In the middle of the city was an open square known as the forum, where markets would be held and business transactions could take place. Three sides of the forum would be lined with shops, with the one remaining side reserved for a civic hall or court known as the *basilica*.

To ward off enemy invaders, Roman cities would be surrounded by an outer wall, while residents would navigate their way around the settlement by means of crisscrossing streets that connected temples, bathhouses and homes.

Although Camulodunum had previously been the home of a small settlement occupied by the Trinovantes tribe, the Romans believed that – by creating cities – they were 'civilising' the native Britons. Indeed, the word 'city' is related to civilisation, originally stemming from the Latin word *civitas*, meaning citizenship.

DID YOU KNOW?

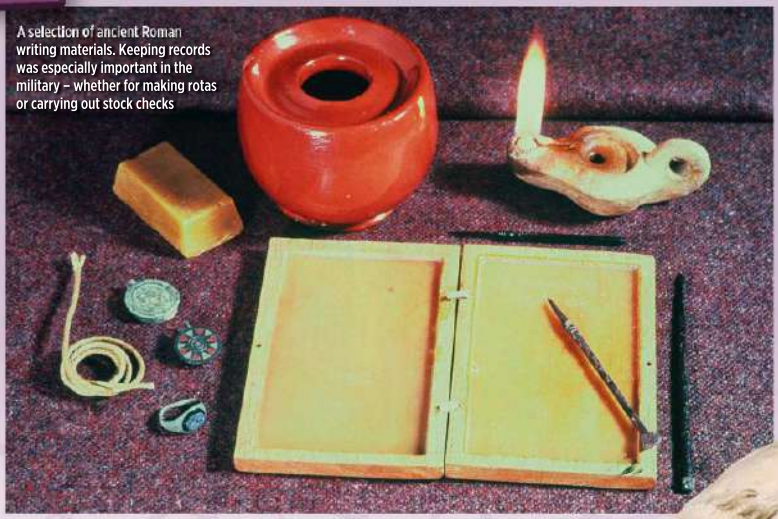
WHEELY GOOD FUN

Roman Colchester was home to Britain's only known chariot racing track. First excavated in 2004, the sporting venue, known as a *circus*, is thought to have been constructed in the early second century AD.

BUREAUCRACY

After conquering Britain, the rule of the emperor was enforced by the legate – a senior ex-consul also in charge of the province's military. Financial matters were handled by a figure known as the procurator, while each town and city had its own council called the *curia*, which was responsible for collecting taxes and dealing with disputes. Crucially, members of the local aristocracy could be elected to the *curia*, including former tribal chiefs, which had the purpose of making native Britons feel involved in government and therefore reducing the chances of rebellion.

Thankfully for historians, the Romans were excellent record-keepers, leaving behind a wealth of information about their lives. This is particularly true of the military, whose prolific note-keeping means we even know the names of some of the people who were involved in building Hadrian's Wall.



A selection of ancient Roman writing materials. Keeping records was especially important in the military – whether for making rotas or carrying out stock checks

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X3

RELIGION

When the Romans first arrived in Britain, the native peoples worshipped many different gods and spirits tied to natural places like hills and rivers. Although they were allowed to keep their beliefs (so long as they also worshipped the Romans' own pantheon of deities), the Roman regime certainly demonstrated little tolerance when it invaded the island of Mona (Anglesey) in AD 60 and killed large numbers of druids (*see page 44*).

Around the early third century AD, Christianity had made its way across the Roman empire to Britain and was eventually banned. Many Christians were persecuted – and, in some extreme cases, killed. However, by AD 313 the religion had become so popular that Emperor Constantine himself had adopted the faith, and it was now tolerated. By the time the fourth century AD had drawn to a close, Christianity was the official religion of the Roman empire.

A 19th-century engraving imagines the people of Roman Britain converting to Christianity

ARCHITECTURE

Far from Rome's imperial centre, Britain was in a vulnerable position, facing threats from the unconquered peoples of northern Caledonia (Scotland), the tribes of Hibernia (Ireland), and the Saxons of northern Europe.

To provide protection, a comprehensive system of walls, fortifications and defences was constructed. The northern frontier, for instance, was defended by the Antonine Wall and Hadrian's Wall (*see page 49*), which included forts along their length. These could house auxiliary troops, ready to push back any enemy attack.

Meanwhile, Caerleon – located in what is now south Wales – was also a hugely important military site. Home to 5,500 soldiers of Second Augustan Legion, it was the location of one of only three permanent legionary fortresses in Britain (the others being in York and Chester). As well as barracks to house its men, Caerleon also boasted a large amphitheatre, where up to 6,000 spectators could watch gladiatorial games and public executions.

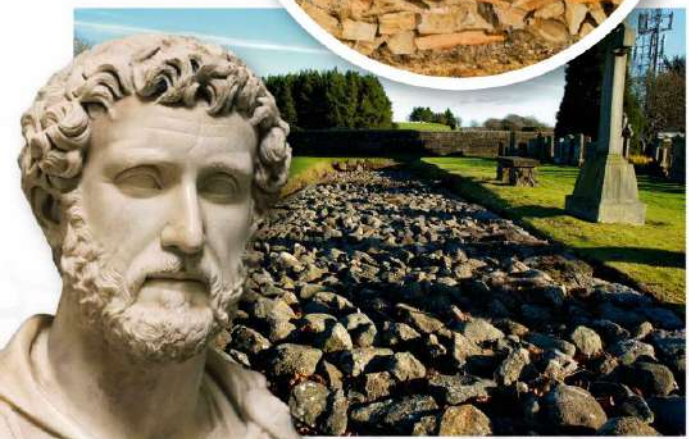
It wasn't all about fighting, however, with Roman-style homes also making their way over to Britain, too. As farms grew and their owners became wealthier, they soon began replacing their simple huts with large multi-storey mansions known as villas (*see page 46*). Whereas pre-Roman dwellings were typically made from timber and circular in shape, the new homes were usually rectangular and constructed from stone.

One of the Romans' most impressive building projects was the huge palace at Fishbourne, West Sussex, which was first properly excavated during the 1960s. The largest Roman residential dwelling ever discovered in Britain, it was only built around 30 years after the conquest – possibly because it was built for a local chief who had switched his allegiances to the Romans early on.

Although much of Roman Britain is still underground, the invaders certainly made a lasting impression.

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

Remains of the underfloor *hypocaust* heating system at Fishbourne Roman Palace in West Sussex



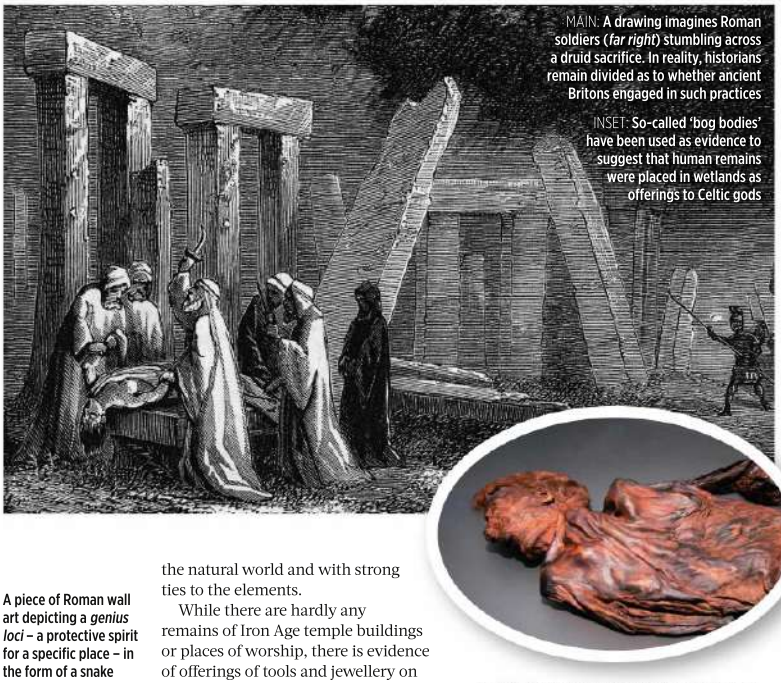
ABOVE: **The amphitheatre at Caerleon was capable of accommodating up to 6,000 spectators, who could enjoy gruesome sporting spectacles**

LEFT: **Exposed foundations of the Antonine Wall near Glasgow. The defence was constructed on the orders of Emperor Antoninus Pius (pictured *far left*)**

SPREADING THE WORD OF THE GODS

The Romans were only too happy to share their pantheon of deities with the native Britons – and learn a little themselves, too

Roman influence on Britain following the invasion in AD 43 is often portrayed as all-encompassing. Bringing Mediterranean-style towns, innovative indoor heating and more, there's an idea that the Romans sought to stamp their 'civilised' beliefs on subjugated native Britons in the imperial outpost, and so changed the course of Britain forever. But when it came to religion, the Romans didn't seek to conquer or convert. Instead, they favoured a tactic known as syncretism, a merging of beliefs that saw existing pagan gods mingle with Roman deities, with temples sitting alongside spiritual sites in a multi-faith society.



MAIN: A drawing imagines Roman soldiers (*far right*) stumbling across a druid sacrifice. In reality, historians remain divided as to whether ancient Britons engaged in such practices

INSET: So-called 'bog bodies' have been used as evidence to suggest that human remains were placed in wetlands as offerings to Celtic gods

DRUIDS AND DEITIES

The picture of religion in pre-Roman Britain is a complicated one as Britons were spread across a series of distinct tribes, and while some were bound by common ties of art, custom and religion, there were many differences. Further ambiguity stems from the fact that pre-Roman Britain was essentially non-literate, so there are few written sources from the time. However, archaeological discoveries suggest that pre-Christian religions in Britain were influenced by the natural world and with strong ties to the elements.

A piece of Roman wall art depicting a *genius loci* – a protective spirit for a specific place – in the form of a snake

While there are hardly any remains of Iron Age temple buildings or places of worship, there is evidence of offerings of tools and jewellery on hilltops and rivers, showing that beliefs were connected to certain features in the landscape. It's believed that these offerings were rituals performed to help seasonal challenges such as the harvest, or to ward off a hard winter.

Like the Romans who had not yet reached their shores, people in Iron Age Britain believed in polytheism – the idea that as well as general gods, there were also local gods or spirits (known as *genii loci*) in every place. Ancient Britons believed in the need to honour these figures, and high-status Celtic metalwork found in rivers, streams and bogs suggests that many of their gods were associated with water (broadly speaking, water deities seem to have been female, while figures associated with the sky and air on hilltops were usually male). In some areas of western Europe, these offerings extended to human remains (such as the 'bog bodies' found in the wetlands of Ireland, Denmark and elsewhere), and the spiritual practice of human sacrifice was particularly repugnant to Romans. And so, with many accounts of Britons' religion often from classical sources and with further detail hard to track down, these religions have often historically been dismissed as 'primitive' or 'barbarian'.

Take the druids, a religious order mentioned by at least 30 authors from the Greek and Roman world. Slim evidence suggests that druids were teachers or priest-figures in Celtic religion, though Roman sources have them as purveyors of soothsaying and evil rituals, due to their reported practice

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X2

LEFT: **Mercury, the winged messenger of the gods, appears on a Royal Corps of Signals memorial. Julius Caesar likened him to the Celtic deity Lugus**

BELOW: **A tablet bearing the image of the Romano-British goddess Coventina**

of human sacrifice. An account by Roman historian Tacitus of the Roman invasion of Mona (Anglesey) in AD 57 describes how the invading force were met by a group of naked and chanting people led by druids. Terrified by what they found, the Roman soldiers massacred the group; according to Tacitus "they smote all who opposed them to the earth and wrapped them in the flames they had themselves kindled". In fact, there is no archaeological evidence that can be confidently linked to the druids in all of Iron Age Britain, though much is still made of the Romans' suppression of the druids, and it lives on for some as an example of Roman religious persecution in Britain.

BORROWING BELIEFS

Druids aside, the Roman approach to religion in Britain was generally marked by tolerance, and in turn the invaders were open to being influenced. The Roman pantheon often adopted some of the gods of those they had conquered, and drew comparisons between Celtic gods and their own. Julius Caesar, in his account of the first-century BC Gallic Wars, *De Bello Gallico*, equated the Celtic god Lugus with Roman deity Mercury, as both were believed to bring light and enlightenment. Both native and Roman traditions believed in mother goddesses that could influence fertility and protection, and would often represent them in groups of three. It is often difficult to know which Celtic gods pre-date the Romans, and which were imported from elsewhere in the Roman empire, as beliefs mingled and borrowed from one another. Roman deities such as Jupiter and Minerva were worshipped in forts and temples, while archaeological evidence shows that figures worshipped by Britons also persevered. For instance, there is a surviving ritual well and carvings made at Romano-British site Hadrian's Wall that honour the river goddess Coventina. Elsewhere, other communities in northern Britain and Ireland remained untouched by any Roman influence, and so Celtic religious practices continued unaffected.

This would all change with Roman emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in AD 312. After a reported religious vision, he made it legal for Christians to practise their faith openly, and though its arrival in Britain is difficult to date exactly, by the fourth century AD Christianity had become a much more visible presence among Britons. In the late fourth century, Emperor Theodosius established Christianity as the official religion of imperial Rome, and following Augustine of Canterbury's famous mission in AD 597 from the Pope to King Æthelberht of Kent, to convert the Anglo-Saxons, Britain's religious course had moved away from paganism towards a Christian future.

WORDS: ELINOR EVANS

ADOPTED DEITIES

Three Celtic figures that turned Roman...

SULIS

Long before the Romans arrived and constructed a complex of baths, the site of the city of Bath was known by Britons for its hot springs, which they believed were the work of the deity Sulis, the Celtic goddess associated with medicine, fertility and healing. Her figure later merged with Minerva, the Roman goddess of healing, to create the super-deity 'Sulis Minerva'.

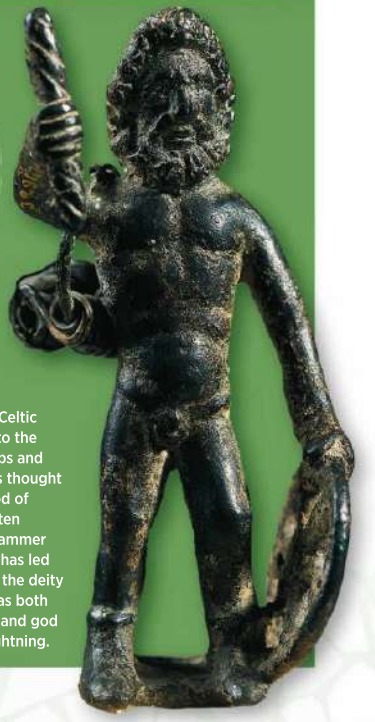
COCIDIUS

Cocidius was another deity worshipped by the Britons to be represented in a dedication near to Hadrian's Wall. Often depicted as a man with a spear and shield and wearing a helmet, the Romans equated the figure with Mars, their god of war. Similar comparisons were made with other Celtic battle gods such as Loucetius and Belatucadrus.

DID YOU KNOW?

PERSONALITY CULT

Claudius, who led the Roman conquest of Britain, was deified after his death in AD 54. A temple in Colchester (Camulodunum) was subsequently dedicated to the late emperor, part of which still survives today within the foundations of the town's castle.



TARANIS

A more universal Celtic figure compared to the *genii loci* of hilltops and streams, Taranis is thought to have been a god of thunder, and is often depicted with a hammer and a wheel. This has led some to compare the deity to Jupiter, who was both a Roman sky god and god of thunder and lightning.

A HOME FROM ROME

We explore the secrets of Lullingstone Villa: a classic example of a Roman dwelling enjoyed by Britannia's elite

When it came to their villas, the Romans living in Britannia felt no need to deviate from the architectural style seen around the Mediterranean; determined to have a familiar piece of home, of civilisation, out on the edge of the empire. A significant surviving example is at Lullingstone, near Eynsford in Kent. First built a few decades after the conquest, around 80–100 AD, and abandoned at some point during the fifth century AD, its archaeological remains can reveal much about Roman Britain.

Lullingstone was a common rural villa, in many ways. It had a winged-corridor design – a central corridor with two wings with more rooms on either side – and boasted ostentatious displays of wealth, such as a bathhouse, *triclinium* (dining room), beautiful mosaics and painted plaster walls. As the villa changed hands over the centuries it changed shape, being enlarged and made more luxurious, reaching the height of its grandeur in the fourth century AD.

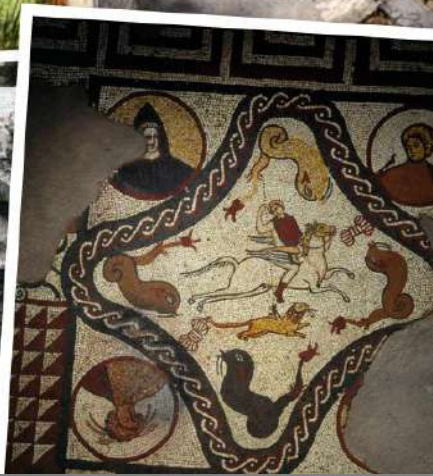
Villas were not for all Romans, but the estates of the wealthy and powerful. They were often the centre of a community, although no evidence of a farming infrastructure has been found at Lullingstone. Instead, two busts that formed part of the decor are thought to reveal who lived there – one depicting Publius Helvius Pertinax, governor of Britain and briefly emperor in AD 193, and the other his father. Pertinax may have used the building as nothing more than a country retreat.

And while villas commonly had shrines for the worship of gods, Lullingstone had an extremely unusual feature above its cellar cult room. One room was used as a house-church and its walls had paintings with overt Christian symbols and meaning, including the *Chi-Rho* (the first two Greek letters of Christ's name). Christianity was officially tolerated in the Roman empire from AD 313, and the owners of Lullingstone had embraced the religion.

Find out more by visiting *english-heritage.org.uk*.

CHI-RHO
Among the Christian wall paintings were several images featuring the Greek letters *chi* and *rho*: the first two letters of Christ's name, and one of the standard symbols of Christianity at this time.

WATER WORSHIP
The presence of a well in the floor of the cellar or cult room, in addition to a wall painting of three water nymphs (*below left*) indicates that the space was dedicated to a water deity.



RIGHT: **The remains of the villa's cellar include an elaborate fresco, depicting a trio of water nymphs**

FAR RIGHT: **A mosaic at Lullingstone shows the mythological Greek hero Bellerophon slaying the Chimera – a hideous, fire-breathing monster**

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X2, NATIONAL TRUST-BARRY BATCHELOR X1

CHRISTIANITY COMES

The wall paintings in the house-church at Lullingstone are some of the earliest evidence for Christianity in Britain. The figures (*above*) are shown praying with upraised arms and outstretched hands – a posture still used by Christian priests praying in front of a congregation.

FAMILIAL PRIDE

At some point during the third century AD, the function of the cult room may have changed to the veneration of ancestors. Access was now only possible from above, and two marble busts were placed near the steps: one has been identified as Publius Helvius Pertinax, a senator and governor of Britannia who went on to become emperor in AD 193 – ruling for just 87 days before his murder. The second is his father, Publius Helvius Successus.

CULT ROOM

By the latter half of the second century AD, the cellar was most likely being used as a cult room for pagan worship. It's unknown whether the villa's occupants were 'hedging their bets' – worshipping the Christian God in the house-church located above, while still appeasing the old gods, or whether, as Christianity spread, some members of the family held fast to their old beliefs. Originally, there were several entrances to the cult room, including external access.

MORE VILLAS TO VISIT

A look at three other fascinating slices of the Mediterranean found in Britain...

BIGNOR, WEST SUSSEX

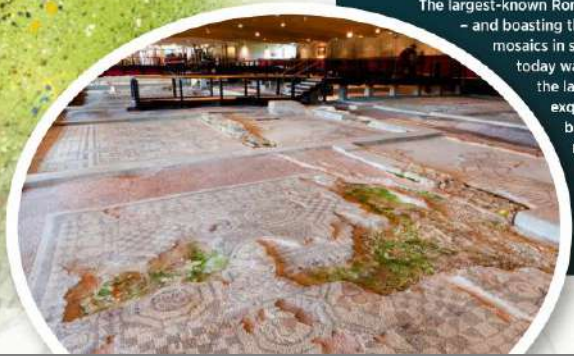
Another villa that underwent a great deal of development, the earliest structural remains at Bignor date to c190 AD, with further expansion taking place from the mid-third to fourth centuries AD. No records of the villa's occupants have survived, but the quality of its mosaics and other finds indicate it probably belonged to a Romano-British family of considerable wealth. Find out more: *bignorromanvilla.co.uk*

CHEDWORTH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

One of the largest and most extensive Roman villas found in Britain, Chedworth's longevity makes it unusual. Built in several phases between the second and fifth centuries AD, the villa was occupied well beyond the economic crash of the late fourth century and the end of Roman rule. Radiocarbon dating has shown that a new mosaic was laid at the villa later than AD 424 – the first-known fifth-century example ever discovered in Britain. Find out more: *nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth-roman-villa*

FISHBOURNE, WEST SUSSEX

The largest-known Roman residence in Britain – and boasting the biggest collection of mosaics in situ – the palace we see today was built at some point in the late 70s AD and boasted exquisite decor and a luxurious bathing suite. The visible remains make up just two thirds of one wing – the rest of the 150 metre sq building remains buried. Find out more: *sussexpast.co.uk*



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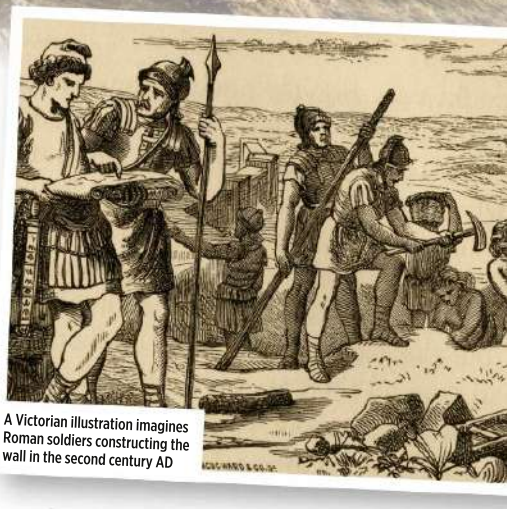
A surviving section of Hadrian's Wall. The barrier originally spanned the width of northern Britain, running from Wallsend (Segedunum) in the east to Bowness-on-Solway (Maia) in the west

ROME'S NORTHERN FRONTIER

Patricia Southern explores the history of Hadrian's Wall – the formidable barrier that separated Britannia from the unconquered tribes of Caledonia

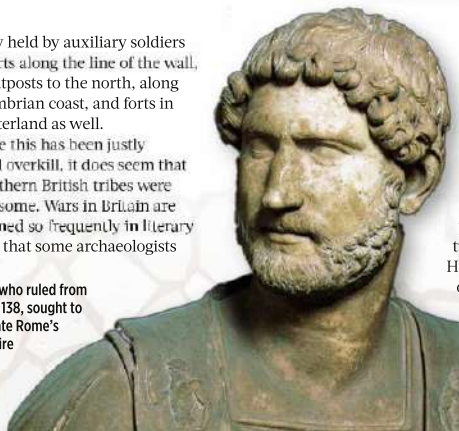


A Victorian illustration imagines Roman soldiers constructing the wall in the second century AD

The wall that runs across northern England in many ways represented Roman emperor Hadrian's new ideology. Ruling from AD 117 to 138, Hadrian abandoned continual conquest and expansion in favour of enclosing the Roman empire within clearly marked frontiers. In some provinces the frontier consisted of a road or a river guarded by forts and towers, while in others (such as in Africa and Britain) the frontier lines consisted of running barriers.

The British frontier was more elaborate than the others. In its final version it was strongly held by auxiliary soldiers in 17 forts along the line of the wall, with outposts to the north, along the Cumbrian coast, and forts in the hinterland as well.

While this has been justly labelled overkill, it does seem that the northern British tribes were troublesome. Wars in Britain are mentioned so frequently in literary sources that some archaeologists accuse the ancient authors of exaggeration. In truth, the British tribes did not readily accept Romanisation. They continued to farm the land in their old ways, and probably fought each other. We do not know enough about the tribes and their organisation to be certain that they were not perpetually aggressive, which in turn means that the function of Hadrian's Wall can be interpreted only from the archaeological remains, with no clues as to Roman policy in dealing with British tribes. ▶



Hadrian, who ruled from AD 117 to 138, sought to consolidate Rome's vast empire

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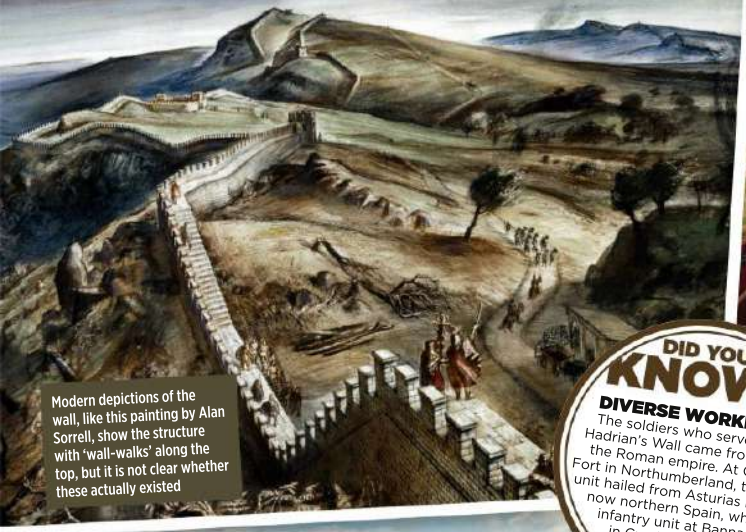


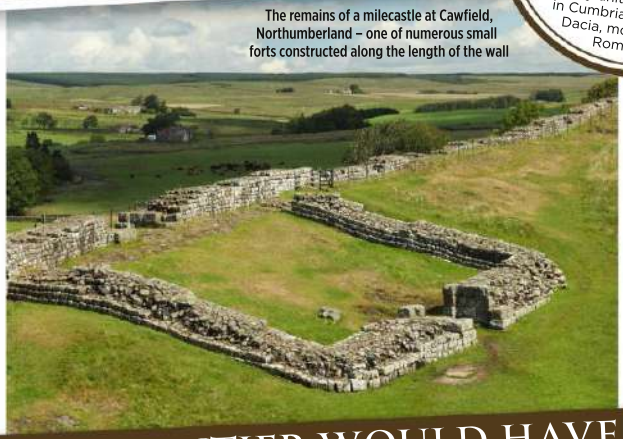
Modern depictions of the wall, like this painting by Alan Sorrell, show the structure with 'wall-walks' along the top, but it is not clear whether these actually existed

Roman soldiers may have undertaken regular patrols beyond the wall to observe hostile tribes

DID YOU KNOW?

DIVERSE WORKFORCE

The soldiers who served along Hadrian's Wall came from all over the Roman empire. At Cilurnum Fort in Northumberland, the cavalry unit hailed from Asturias in what is now northern Spain, while the infantry unit at Banna Fort in Cumbria came from Dacia, modern-day Romania.



The remains of a milecastle at Cawfield, Northumberland – one of numerous small forts constructed along the length of the wall

The *vallum*, a ditch dug along the south side of the wall, still remains today. It may have been used to protect vehicles and animals belonging to the forts

Italian reenactors, dressed as Roman soldiers, clash with a band of 'Celts' at Hadrian's Wall in 2015. The structure's history remains a source of fascination

"NO FRONTIER WOULD HAVE BEEN CAPABLE OF STOPPING MASSES OF TRIBESMEN DETERMINED TO CROSS IT"

The frontier system was complex. Starting from the north and working south, there were outposts beyond the wall, three Hadrianic forts in the west, and later forts in the east along what is now the A68 (a major road running from Darlington to Edinburgh). The original version of the wall in the west, from the River Irthing to the Solway Firth, was built of turf.

It could be that the tribes in this area were hostile, and the frontier had to be built rapidly. On the other hand, there could have been a shortage of suitable stone, since the locally available red sandstone is too friable, or easily crumbled. This western section of the wall was replaced in better stone in the second century AD.

The soldiers in the outposts may have undertaken regular patrols to observe the tribes, as suggested by the names of some of the third-century units, which were called *exploratores*, or 'scouts'.

Further south there was the wall itself. It was protected by a ditch on its northern side, designed to prevent close approach, and reinforced in some places by three rows of pits, probably containing stacked thorn branches, which made penetration difficult. These features may have been established in the flatter areas, perhaps not all along the wall.

A STURDY DETERRENT

Then came the wall itself, originally around 10 Roman feet (generally shorter than standard English feet) thick, later reduced to eight feet, resulting in a frontier of different dimensions. We do not know how high it was, and most controversially there may or may not have been a wall-walk along the top. No one can say if the Romans patrolled along the wall or confined their lookout posts to the forts, fortlets called 'milecastles', and turrets placed every third of a mile between them.

Whether or not there was a wall-walk, there was still a lot of dead ground where observation would have been impeded. However, this probably did not matter, as it is unlikely that the wall would have been defended like a castle under siege. Instead, the most probable function of the wall was to prevent anyone from getting too close or massing together in the distance. Conversely, it has also

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X6, DR MILES RUSSELL X1

been suggested that manning the wall top would have served to delay hostile tribes, while troops were assembled.

South of the wall there was another, larger ditch, labelled the *vallum* by the Venerable Bede (although, to the Romans, that term referred to the whole frontier system). On either side of this ditch there was a mound of earth. The *vallum* is a puzzle, variously interpreted by archaeologists. It was clearly important to the Romans because – unlike the northern ditch – it was continuous, and cut through rock where necessary. It is possible that the tribes south of the wall were prone to raiding. This may be the reason why the Romans dug the *vallum* – in order to guard vehicles and animals belonging to the forts.

No Roman frontier would have been capable of stopping masses of tribesmen who were determined to cross it. However, the presence of a solid barrier backed up with military force provided a strong psychological deterrent. It is significant that the emperors who followed Hadrian did not abandon the concept of running barriers. Instead, they repaired and rebuilt frontiers. For reasons that archaeologists do not fully understand, Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, took over Lowland Scotland and built a similar frontier of turf between the Forth and the Clyde. However, it was held for only about two decades before Hadrian's Wall was recommissioned and remained the northern frontier of Britannia (even though military campaigns were undertaken to the north of it).

THE FRONTIER FALLS

In the early third century AD, the emperor Severus fought a war in what is now Scotland, but did not hold the territory. He repaired Hadrian's Wall so extensively that 19th-century archaeologists believed that he had been responsible for building it. In the fourth century AD, when Constantius Chlorus also campaigned in the north, Hadrian's Wall remained the frontier. No one can say for certain why these emperors did not annexe the lands they fought over.

What happened to the wall at the end of the Roman period is not entirely clear. Its function as a frontier may have been lost, with people instead trying to make a living inside the forts, looking to their own protection for as long as they could. Parts of the wall were repaired in timber or occasionally crude stonework, but the infrastructure of the empire had lost cohesion. By the end of the sixth century AD, much of the frontier had probably been abandoned.

The fact that we do not know everything there is to know about the wall is undoubtedly a large part of its fascination. Furthermore, on top of its historical interest, the wall also runs through some of the most stunning scenery in northern England.

PATRICIA SOUTHERN is the author of *Hadrian's Wall: Everyday Life on a Roman Frontier* (Amberley, 2016)

Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius (*left*), commissioned another defensive barrier, spanning the central belt of Scotland. Built in the years after AD 142, it is now known as the Antonine Wall (*above*)

THREE OTHER ROMAN FORTIFICATIONS

Hadrian's Wall wasn't the only defensive structure the Romans built in Britannia

BINCHESTER ROMAN FORT, COUNTY DURHAM

Founded in around AD 80 and originally covering about 70,000 sq metres, Binchester (known to the Romans as Vinovia) was, for a time, one of the largest Roman military installations in northern Britain. Built to house a Roman cavalry unit that included troops from across the empire, Binchester commanded the main road that ran from the legionary headquarters at York northwards to Hadrian's Wall. Today, it boasts one of Britain's most intact Roman *hypocausts* (underfloor heating systems, *above*).

PORTCHESTER CASTLE, HAMPSHIRE

Portchester Castle began life as a Roman shore fort and remains one of the best-preserved examples of its kind in northern Europe. Now known as one of the 'Forts of the Saxon Shore', it was constructed during the third century AD to protect Britain from Saxon pirates who were raiding the south coast. The castle's Roman defensive circuit still survives, with 16 towers and perimeter walls that measure six metres tall.

VINDOLANDA, NORTHUMBERLAND

Just a mile south of Hadrian's Wall lies one of Roman Britain's most important sites – the auxiliary fort of Vindolanda. A turf rampart was built in around AD 85 to protect the nearby road, but once the wall had been built, the fort was doubled in size, with shops and homes added. At its peak, around 1,000 men were stationed at Vindolanda; the stone remains that can be seen today date from the third century AD.

LEFT: **A trio of historical reenactors, dressed as Roman soldiers, patrol Hadrian's Wall at Birdoswald, Cumbria**

BELOW: **A gang of Caledonian 'barbarians' pictured at the same event. In real life, frequent raids by northern British tribes gradually wore down the Romans' steely resolve**

THE END OF AN ERA

After nearly 400 years in power, the Romans abandoned their British outpost during the fifth century AD. But did their influence truly wane?

A coin minted during the reign of Honorius. In AD 410, the emperor is famously said to have told Britain that it should "look to its own defences"

"The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us to the barbarians. Between these two means of death, we are either killed or drowned." From the arrival of the Normans in 1066 through to the threat of Nazi invasion in 1940, the residents of Britain have faced periods of intense – and potentially catastrophic – change on numerous occasions. Yet as the above plea proves – reportedly issued by beleaguered Britons to a commander in Gaul in the early fifth century AD – few episodes can match the collapse of Roman Britain for sheer trauma.

For almost 400 years – since Emperor Claudius had ordered his legions across the Channel from mainland Europe in AD 43 – Britain had been subsumed into the mighty Roman empire. Not all of Britain was subject to occupation, but across much of the island, they used Roman coins, ate Roman foods, filled their homes with Roman pottery, were subject to Roman laws, and 'enjoyed' the protection of the Roman military. Then everything changed.

The precise year that change occurred has traditionally been given as AD 410, when the emperor Honorius famously told Britain to "look to its own defences". Other historians argue that Britain passed into a post-Roman age a year earlier when, so the pagan writer Zosimus tells us, the pressure of barbarian invaders forced the British "to throw off Roman rule and live independently". Either way, by the time that the Latin theologian Saint Jerome declared that Britain was a "land fertile in tyrants" in around AD 415, the Roman garrison had, it appears, largely gone. But why did the soldiers leave, and what did Britain look like in the wake of their departure?

During the late fourth century AD, a combination of factors including incompetent emperors, endemic diseases and a huge influx of non-Roman people exerted enormous pressures on the western Roman empire – pressures that

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2, RUMPUS MEDIA / CHANNEL FIVE X1

were soon causing cracks to appear in the apparatus of Roman rule in Britain.

We know that there was a massive rebellion of Roman troops on Hadrian's Wall in AD 367 – an uprising that was accompanied by raids of 'barbarians' from Scotland and Ireland. Then in AD 383, as the western empire at large was wracked by infighting, Magnus Maximus, a commander in Britain, was proclaimed emperor by his troops and reportedly took most of his men to fight in Gaul. It's unlikely that they ever returned.

The coup-de-grace to Britain's Roman administration may have been delivered by Germanic tribes, described by the sixth-century AD British writer Gildas as "Angli" and "Saxones". They may have initially been employed by the Romans to defend against other barbarians – before, so it's been suggested, biting the hand that used to feed them.

Establishing exactly how Britain changed in these tumultuous few years – as it was plunged into a new, post-Roman reality – has proved a formidable task. Here we're in the hands of archaeology and the (often highly unreliable) accounts of chroniclers, sometimes writing decades – or even centuries – after the events they describe. It's thought that Roman coins and mosaics largely disappeared in the early fifth century AD, and that major pottery industries in places such as Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire ceased production. Levels of literacy dropped, wood replaced stone in building work and towns went into decline.

Interestingly, Britain has yielded more caches of hidden precious metal dating from AD 300 to AD 500 than the rest of the Roman empire combined. Is this evidence of widespread chaos and bloodletting, of the rich seeking to hide their wealth from marauding gangs capitalising on a breakdown of law and order? Maybe. Maybe not.

Despite the turmoil, elements of the Roman way of life did survive. Evidence of this has been discovered at locales such as Wroxeter in Shropshire, which was rebuilt in the fifth and possibly sixth centuries AD in a style influenced by Roman architecture. Here were people attempting to keep the Roman way of life going. There's also Tintagel in Cornwall, whose residents imported Mediterranean pottery, *amphorae* and glass beyond the early fifth century AD.

Finally, let's not forget that most of the inhabitants of Britain post-AD 410 were themselves descended from the residents of Roman Britain – 'barbarians' couldn't drive them all into the sea. And while Germanic tribes may have wielded increasing influence over the decades that followed, these survivors dominated much of the British Isles long after the legions had gone.

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

Discoveries of buried treasures such as the Seaton Down Hoard (*above*), and this ornate bust found in Suffolk (*right*), suggest that items were stashed away as order broke down

GET HOOKED

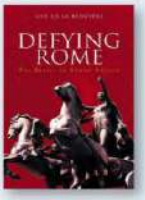
If we've whetted your appetite for Roman Britain, why not explore the topic further with our pick of books, films and podcasts

BOOKS

UnRoman Britain: Exposing the Great Myth of Britannia

By Dr Miles Russell and Stuart Laycock (The History Press, 2010)

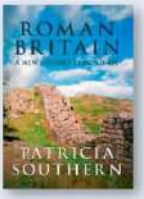
Russell and Laycock look at the myths of Roman Britain, exploring why many Britons never fully embraced the empire, and how even the Roman army in Britain became chronically rebellious and a source of instability that ultimately affected the whole regime.



Defying Rome: The Rebels of Roman Britain

By Guy de la Bédoyère (The History Press, 2003)

Covering 11 rebellions, Guy de la Bédoyère explains why Roman Britain was a hotbed of dissent – from Boudica and Caratacus, who wanted the Romans out, to Allectus and Carausius, whose rebellions were inspired by a lust for power within the empire.



Roman Britain: A New History 55 BC–AD 450

By Patricia Southern (Amberley, 2011)

Through the works of ancient historians, annalists, biographers and more, Patricia Southern tells the story of Roman Britain: from first contact through to invasion, conquest, coexistence and eventual decline, incorporating the political, social and cultural history of 'Britannia'.

ONLINE AND AUDIO

▶ **You're Dead To Me: Boudica** *(BBC Radio 4)*: Greg Jenner and guests discuss the iconic warrior queen. Listen at *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07n8nrg*

History Extra ▶ **For podcasts, features, quizzes, interviews and more on Roman Britain, visit our website: *historyextra.com/period/roman***

WATCH

Walking Britain's Roman Roads

(streaming on My5)

Bestselling author and historian Dan Jones traces the story of Britain's ancient Roman past by following six of their famously straight roads – beginning with Watling Street and ending with Stane Street.

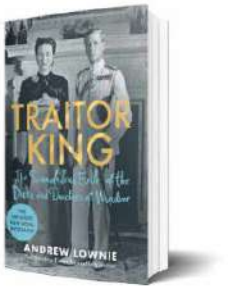
The Eagle (2011)

(streaming on Amazon Prime, Apple TV and Google Play)

Based on Rosemary Sutcliffe's 1954 novel *The Eagle of the Ninth*, a young centurion tries to discover what happened to Rome's Ninth Legion, which disappeared in the second century AD.

BOOKS OF 2021

Image: Shutterstock



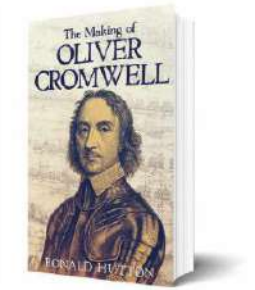
Traitor King
Andrew Lownie
Available from amazon.co.uk

Bestselling historian Andrew Lownie reveals the dramatic lives of the Windsors post-abdication. This is a story of a Royal shut out by his family and forced into exile; of the Nazi attempts to recruit the Duke to their cause, and of why the Duke, as Governor of the Bahamas, tried to shut down the investigation into the murder of a close friend. It is a story of a couple obsessed with their status, financially exploiting their position, and manipulating the media to portray themselves as victims.

The Autumn of the Ace
Louis de Bernières
Available from amazon.co.uk

Daniel Pitt was an RAF pilot in the First World War and an SOE agent in the Second. Now he faces conflicts closer to home. Daniel's marriage is over and his relationship with his son, Bertie, has never been good. But the death of his brother Archie gives Daniel a reason to resolve old problems.

The final instalment in Louis de Bernières' poignant trilogy charting the impact of war and the end of empire on one family.

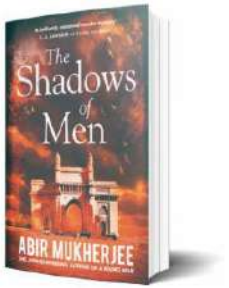


The Making of Oliver Cromwell
Ronald Hutton
bit.ly/HuttonMakingofOliverCromwell

Oliver Cromwell, with his complex and contradictory character, is one of the great figures of history. Untangling facts from fiction, Ronald Hutton reveals a Cromwell who was both genuine in his faith and deliberate in his dishonesty—and uncovers the inner workings of the man who has puzzled biographers for centuries.
"A superb, coruscating, immensely stimulating profile of the rising Cromwell"– Jessie Childs, *Daily Telegraph*

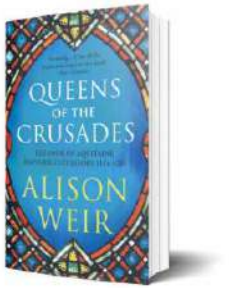
The Last Viking: The True Story of King Harald Hardrada
Don Hollway
ospreypublishing.com

"[A] riveting story…you owe it to yourself to pick up 'The Last Viking'. It's that exciting, that good." – *The Washington Post*.
The Last Viking tells the incredible story of King Harald Hardrada of Norway. Combining Norse sagas, Byzantine accounts, Anglo-Saxon chronicles, and even King Harald's own verse and prose into a single, compelling story, Don Hollway brings the true tale of this Viking hero to life. Price: £20



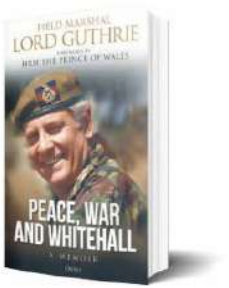
The Shadows of Men
Abir Mukherjee
Available from amazon.co.uk

The Shadows of Men is the latest instalment in the "unmissable" (*The Times*), award-winning Wyndham and Banerjee series by Abir Mukherjee, set in 1920s colonial India. In Calcutta in 1923, Captain Sam Wyndham and Sergeant Surendranath Banerjee must track down the murderer of a respected Hindu theologian before the city descends into religious conflict. At a time of heightened political tension and taking the detectives all the way to Bombay, this is the pair's greatest challenge yet.



Queens of the Crusades
Alison Weir
Available from amazon.co.uk

The second volume in Alison Weir's new non-fiction series charting the lives of England's medieval queens. You'll meet crusading queens, queens in rebellion against their king, queen seductresses, learned queens, queens in battle... From the formidable Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Henry II, to Eleanor of Castile, the grasping but beloved wife of Edward I, the Plantagenet queens broke through medieval constraints to exercise power and influence, for good and sometimes for ill.



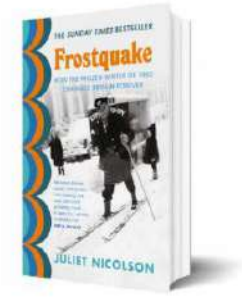
Peace, War and Whitehall: A Memoir
Field Marshal Lord Guthrie
ospreypublishing.com

"Charles Guthrie has been one of Britain's foremost soldiers as well as a terrific personality throughout his remarkable life. It is great that he is now telling his own story." – Sir Max Hastings

Peace, War and Whitehall tells the extraordinary story of Field Marshal the Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank's unique military career with the British Army, from a young platoon commander through to the Chief of the General Staff.

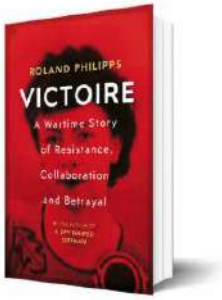
For King and Country: The British Monarchy and the First World War
Heather Jones
cambridge.org/KingCountry

A ground-breaking history of the British monarchy in the First World War and of the social and cultural functions that monarchism played.
"...A truly outstanding book." – John Horne, Editor of *A Companion to World War I*



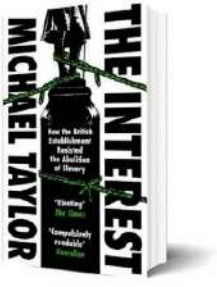
Frostquake
Juliet Nicolson
bit.ly/frostquake

On Boxing Day 1962, when Juliet Nicolson was eight years old, the snow began to fall. It didn't stop for 10 weeks. This is the story of the winter that changed Britain forever. The threat of nuclear war had reached its terrifying height, unemployment was on the rise, and yet, underneath the frozen surface, new life was beginning to stir. From hardship to emancipation, through pop stars, poets, shopkeepers and family experience, this riveting social history is now in paperback.



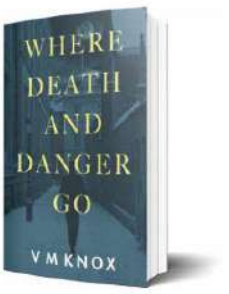
Victoire
Roland Philipps
amazon.co.uk/Victoire-Wartime-Resistance-Collaboration-Betrayal/dp/1847925812/

Mathilde Carré was known as the Cat but her code name was Agent Victoire. Carré was a passionate, courageous spy whose activities in occupied Paris in the 1940s undoubtedly gave the Allies the advantage over Hitler's Nazi forces. *Victoire* is a story of audacity, complicity and the difficult choices of wartime.



The Interest: How the British Establishment Resisted the Abolition of Slavery
Michael Taylor
amazon.co.uk/Interest-British-Establishment-Resisted-Abolition/dp/152911098X/

In 1807, Parliament outlawed the slave trade in the British Empire. But for the next 25 years, the 'West India Interest' worked to keep more than 700,000 people enslaved. This long overdue exposé of one of the UK's darkest times reveals how the 'Interest' was supported by nearly all the British establishment.



Where Death and Danger Go
VM Knox
vmknoxauthor.com

Where Death and Danger Go is the third book in this WWII series. Set in the dark days of 1941, Britain fights on alone. Invasion and fear hang in the air. A German spy parachutes into Cambridgeshire as another man is murdered nearby. Is he another enemy spy or has he been sent to his death? Either way, a killer lurks. Major Clement Wisdom of the SIS is sent to investigate and discovers a web of conspiracy where kidnap, murder and revenge threaten his life and the safety of the nation.

Declassified documents relating to Operation Mincemeat on display at the Churchill War Rooms in London. The outlandish ruse paved the way for the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and left the Axis powers on the back foot

MOST SECRET

MOST SECRET

D.M.
Lt.Cdr.Montague-
MOST SECRET

D.M.I.

The Prime Minister has approved the proposed plan for Operation "Mincemeat" and has directed that General Eisenhower should be informed of the plan.

Brigadier Hollis is making the necessary arrangements in this connection. (C.O.S.(43) 77th (O) Conclusions, Item 9).

Secretary to First Sea Lord.
16th April, 1943.

OPERATION MINCEMEAT AND THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS

As the Allies plotted to invade Sicily in 1943, two British intelligence officers concocted an elaborate deception operation involving a corpse, a submarine, and a briefcase stuffed with documents. What followed would alter the course of World War II – and save thousands of lives. With a major new film about the hoax set to premiere this month, **Jonny Wilkes** reveals how the events originally unfolded...

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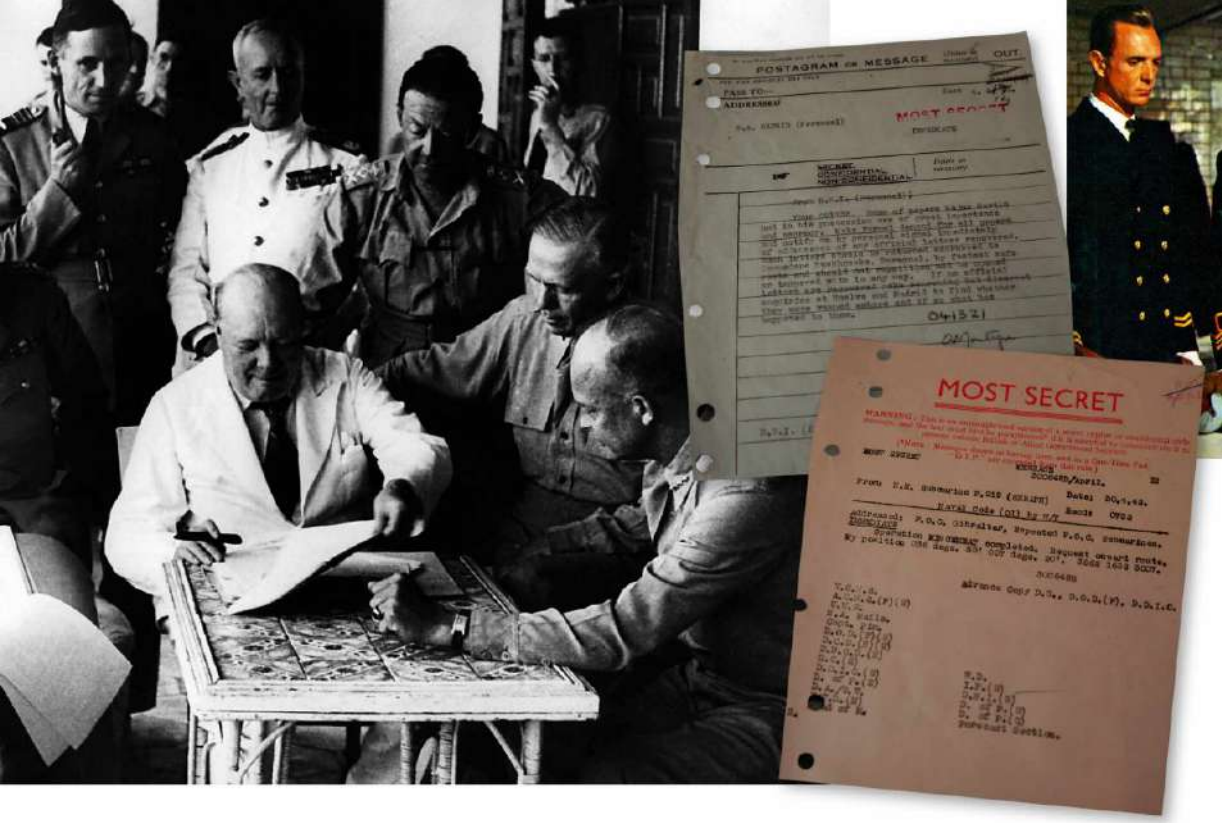


Adolf Clauss and Karl-Erich Kühlenthal could not believe the stroke of luck that had come their way. After a nervy few days of back and forth with the Spanish authorities, the agents – members of Germany's military intelligence service, the Abwehr – had got their hands on a piece of information that could change the course of World War II: a top-secret letter between two British generals. It had been discovered, on 30 April 1943, among the possessions of a dead Royal Marine floating off the coast; the victim of a plane crash who must have been in the water for some time until a local fisherman spotted his remains.

The letter hinted at the planned Allied invasion of Greece and Sardinia in the next few months. With this, the Germans could halt the enemy's attempts to get a foothold in Europe before it got going. The Abwehr put a copy of the letter on Hitler's desk, and he quickly ordered infantry and panzer divisions, fighter squadrons, artillery and torpedo boats to defend Greece, Sardinia and the Balkans. Now, the invasion was doomed to fail – all thanks to the chance find of a dead British officer.

Meanwhile in London, in a dim, smoky and cramped basement room of the Admiralty, the men and women of Section 17M banged the tables and jumped up and down in celebration when they heard of the Germans' preparations. And put in front of Winston Churchill was a telegram: "Mincemeat swallowed rod, line and sinker."

CODENAME MINCEMEAT

Hitler had been duped. The body was not Captain (Acting Major) William Martin of the Royal Marines, but a homeless man called Glyndwr Michael; the personal papers, keys, cigarettes, stamps, theatre tickets and loving mementoes from a fiancée in his pockets had been fabricated and planted; the fisherman found the body exactly where the British carefully planned it to be so that the Germans would know about it; and the top-secret letter was a hoax. The whole thing was a brilliant, elaborate and macabre deception – code-named Operation Mincemeat – to hoodwink the Germans from the real target of the invasion, Sicily.

ABOVE LEFT: **Churchill discusses the invasion of Sicily with other senior Allied figures in 1943. Mincemeat led Hitler to believe the real landings would occur in Greece**

ABOVE RIGHT: **A British memo expressing fake concern over the lost briefcase (*top*), along with a communication confirming that HMS *Seraph* had delivered its 'cargo' (*bottom*)**

"Photographing the corpse for the ID card proved ineffective as well as morbid, so they had to scout for someone who looked just like him"

By late 1942, success in the North African campaign had allowed the Allies to turn the attentions to the "soft underbelly" of German-held Europe. Sicily was the obvious launch point, since control of the island meant control of shipping in the Mediterranean. But that was the problem: it was too obvious. "Everyone but a bloody fool would know that it's Sicily," said Churchill.

That did not stop the Allies wanting to take Sicily, though, as a stepping stone to Italy. So they needed to pull off a spectacular act of misdirection to convince the Germans that they intended to go for Greece instead. To that end, the deception plan Operation Barclay set up a non-existent army, faked manoeuvres, and carried out real sabotages on infrastructure to divert the Axis powers and confirm Hitler's paranoia that the biggest threat to Europe would surely come from the Balkans.

Mincemeat would be the most ambitious, and successful, scheme of the lot. The genesis of the idea went back to the early days of the war with the 1939 'Trout Memo', so named as the document compared deception of the enemy to fly-fishing for trout. Although issued by Britain's director of naval intelligence, John Godfrey, the true author may well have been his assistant, Ian Fleming.

Certainly, the dozens of ways to fool the enemy listed in the memo would have

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X5

not looked out of place in one of Fleming's later James Bond novels. Around halfway down, the 28th idea had the enigmatic title "A suggestion (not a very nice one)". That suggestion: "A corpse dressed as an airman, with despatches in his pockets, could be dropped on the coast, supposedly from a parachute that had failed. I understand there is no difficulty in obtaining corpses at the Naval Hospital, but, of course, it would have to be a fresh one."

Nothing may have ever come of this, but to deceive the Axis about Sicily required the upmost limits of what Churchill dubbed "corkscrew thinking" – imaginative problem solving beyond the linear approach – and Number 28 was resurrected in 1943. The corkscrew thinkers responsible were Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu, both experienced with double agents, counter-espionage, counter-intelligence and misinformation with their work for the secret XX Committee.

ABOVE: **Ewen Montagu, one of the masterminds behind Mincemeat, pictured in 1954. His account of the affair, *The Man Who Never Was*, would inspire an award-winning film of the same name**

TOP: **A still from the 1956 film adaptation, starring Clifton Webb (*centre*) as Montagu and Robert Flemyng (*left*) as a character based on Mincemeat's other chief architect, Charles Cholmondeley**

Cholmondeley (pronounced 'Chumley') was the bespectacled, moustachioed, adventure-seeking eccentric of the pair, seconded from the Royal Air Force having never flown. The pipe-smoking Montagu had been an eminent barrister before the war before signing up with naval intelligence. They led a team, Section 17M, in a basement room underneath the Admiralty, where around a dozen people squeezed into a space fit for six, the air thick with smoke and its fluorescent lighting making everyone look blue.

From Room 13, the first issue that Cholmondeley and Montagu had to solve for Mincemeat was acquiring the right body. It could not have injuries that contradicted the story of a plane crash, and there had to be no chance of family showing up asking questions. They consulted the pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury and secured the services of London coroner Bentley Purchase, who came across the ideal cadaver in January 1943.

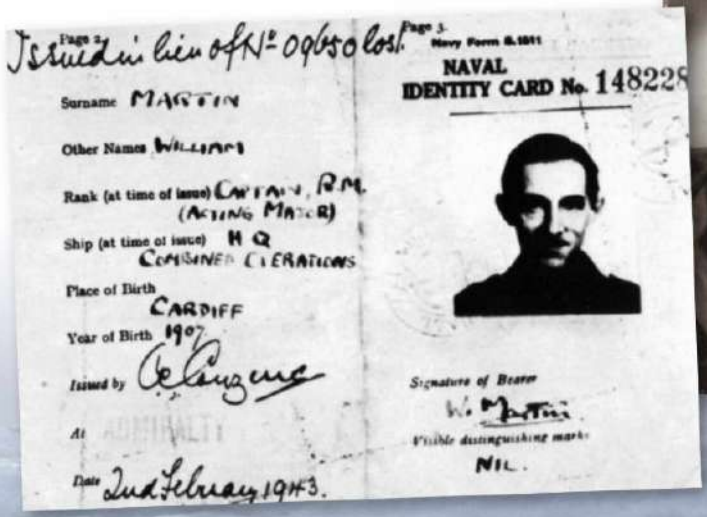
A jobless and homeless Welshman named Glyndwr Michael ended his life, aged 34, by ingesting rat poison during that cold winter. Found in a warehouse near King's Cross and taken to Purchase, his death report described him as a "lunatic". To Montagu, he was nothing more than "a bit of a ne'er-do-well... the only worthwhile thing that he ever did he did after his death". In fact, so unimportant was the man Michael used to be, that if not for a chance discovery by an amateur historian in the 1990s, the identity of the Mincemeat body may have remained a mystery.

With Michael kept in a mortuary refrigerator, Cholmondeley and Montagu got to work on the details they were certain would make the hoax more believable to the Germans. They gave their fake officer an exhaustive identity and backstory, beginning with the name William Martin, a common surname in the Royal Marines, and the rank of Captain (Acting Major), which they deemed high enough to carry top-secret documents, but not so important that the enemy would know him.

FORGING AN IDENTITY

Photographing the corpse for the ID card proved ineffective as well as morbid, so they had to scout for someone who looked like Michael and eventually discovered a striking resemblance in MI5's Ronnie Reed. Then came the 'pocket litter': everyday items anyone would have on them. In Martin's case, this meant keys, stamps, cigarettes, matches, a St Christopher's medallion, theatre ticket stubs, a receipt for a new shirt, a letter from his father, and even an overdraft notice from Lloyd's Bank. These had to be written in special ink so as not to run while in the water.

A masterstroke was to invent a fiancée for Martin. So included in his effects was a photo of 'Pam' – actually an MI5 clerk, Jean Leslie – a receipt for an engagement ring, and a couple of beautifully poignant love letters to "Bill darling". "That lovely golden day we spent together – oh! I know it has been said before, but if only time could sometimes stand still just for a minute – But that line of thought is too pointless. Pull your socks up Pam and don't be a silly little fool," one read. "Don't please let them send you off ▶


Page 2.
Issued in lieu of No. 09850 lost.
Page 3.
Navy Form S.1011
NAVAL IDENTITY CARD No. 14822
Surname MARTIN
Other Names WILLIAM
Rank (at time of issue) CAPTAIN, R.M. (ACTING MAJOR)
Ship (at time of issue) H.Q. COMBINED OPERATIONS
Place of Birth CARDIFF
Year of Birth 1907
Issued by
At
Date 2nd February 1943.
Signature of Bearer
Visible distinguishing marks NIL.

LEFT: **A picture of MI5 officer Ronnie Reed, whose resemblance to Glyndwr Michael meant he was chosen to pose for William Martin's ID card (*shown far left*)**

BELOW: **The dead body carried the photograph of a girlfriend named 'Pam' – in reality, MI5 clerk Jean Leslie**

into the blue the horrible way they do nowadays – now that we've found each other out of the whole world, I don't think I could bear it."

Cholmondeley and Montagu clearly enjoyed creating this character to fool the Nazis. They got 'Martin's' underwear, for example, from the wardrobe of recently deceased historian and politician Herbert Fisher. Cholmondeley wore the uniform to give it wear and tear, while Montagu, truly living the role, had a strange romance with Jean Leslie pretending to be Bill and calling her Pam. This worried his wife enough that she rushed back from the United States.

By mid-April, with the invasion of Sicily nearing, it was time to get Mincemeat underway. Cholmondeley and Montagu prepared the body and loaded it into a container filled with dry ice for the journey to Scotland (driven by a pre-war motor racing champion, no less) where the submarine HMS *Seraph* was waiting. It took 10 days and two enemy bombings to reach the drop-off point, all the while the crew unaware of the purpose of their mission. Once the officers lowered Martin into the water, the engines revved so that the wash would push it towards the Spanish shore.

Early on 30 April, a sardine fisherman came across the supposedly drowned British officer near Huelva. Assumed to be a casualty of war, the local authorities ordered an autopsy, which risked giving away the con were it not for the British vice-consul, working with the Mincemeat team, suggesting the pathologists go for an early lunch. The Spanish then buried Martin with full military honours.

But the dead man had been found with a black briefcase chained to his trench coat, inside which was a letter marked "Personal and Most Secret". This was the lynchpin of Mincemeat; a communication from Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Nye, vice-chief of the Imperial General Staff – who did actually write it for Cholmondeley and Montagu to ensure complete authenticity – to General Sir Harold Alexander, commander of the 18th Army Group in North Africa.

A MOST DIFFICULT CASE

Among the rambling paragraphs about the Guards Brigade and US service medals, Nye referred to the imminent invasion, Operation Husky. "We have had recent information that the Boche [the Germans] have been reinforcing and strengthening their defences in Greece and Crete, and CIGS [Chief of the Imperial General Staff] felt that our forces for the assault were insufficient," it read. "It was agreed by the Chiefs of Staff that the 5th Division should be reinforced by one Brigade Group for the assault on the beach south of Cape Araxos and that a similar reinforcement should be made for the 56th Division at Kalamata."

Nye even mentioned Sicily as having been dismissed as a potential location for the invasion. Instead it would be used for Operation Brimstone, a double-bluff to fool the Germans: "We stand a very good chance of making him [the Boche] think we will go for Sicily – it is an obvious objective and one about which he must be nervous."

German agents quickly heard about the dead British officer with top-secret documents. While Spain was neutral, the government cooperated with the Nazis and so Cholmondeley and Montagu knew the letter would reach the Abwehr. That had been why they selected the Huelva area, where the tides were sure to carry Martin to one well-connected agent in particular, Adolf Clauss.

Then when they sent a telegram, intending it to be intercepted, apparently showing the British making concerted efforts to get the briefcase back unopened, Clauss knew he had something important. "Secret papers probably in black briefcase, earliest possible information required, it should be recovered at once, care should be taken that it does not get into undesirable hands," it read. Of course, the letter was meant to get to undesirable hands. Cholmondeley and Montagu had planted an eyelash in the envelope so they would know it had been opened

ABOVE: **Sir Archibald Nye, vice-chief of the Imperial General Staff, was responsible for writing the pivotal document concealed inside the briefcase**

RIGHT: **Matthew Macfadyen, Colin Firth and Johnny Flynn (*left to right*) star in a major new film about the deception, due for release in January 2022**

FAR RIGHT: **Troops and materiel land on Sicily on 10 July 1943. The Allies would have full control over the island within 38 days**

BELOW RIGHT: **The body of Glyndwr Michael, ready to be deployed. His true identity was not made public until the 1990s**

BELOW: **A scene from *The Man Who Never Was* shows the crew of HMS *Seraph* releasing their 'bait' into the sea**

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X3

"An entire panzer division redeployed from France to Greece, troop numbers swelled in the Balkans, and aircraft, artillery and torpedo boats were actually transferred from Sicily"

when the Spanish inevitably returned the briefcase.

HITLER TAKES THE BAIT

For some reason, though, the Spanish refused to hand anything over to the Germans. It needed the intervention of the most senior Abwehr agent in the country, Karl-Erich Kühlenthal, to get the letter finally opened and photographed after more than a week. Before long, back in Britain, decryptions of German High Command messages at Bletchley Park proved the contents of the letter had made it to Hitler's desk.

It was still an anxious wait in Room 13 to find out whether Hitler had been fooled, but when the news started arriving it was everything Cholmondeley and Montagu had hoped. An entire panzer division redeployed from France to Greece, troop numbers swelled in the Balkans, and aircraft, artillery and torpedo boats were actually transferred from Sicily to defend against the invasion.

Hitler had been so convinced by the "discovered British order" that even when the real Operation Husky on Sicily began on 10 July, he thought it to be a feint from the real target. Within 38 days, the Allied forces had captured the island with far fewer casualties and ship losses than projected. Italy followed, resulting in the downfall of Benito Mussolini's regime, and Hitler had to cancel an offensive against the Soviets in order to move troops to fight on this new front in Europe. The course of the war had been changed, but not in the way the Germans thought when they read that letter found on the body of, as Montagu titled his account of Operation Mincemeat, "the man who never was".

GET HOOKED

FILM

Operation Mincemeat, starring Colin Firth, Matthew Macfadyen and Kelly Macdonald, is scheduled to be released in UK cinemas on 14 January 2022

Q&A
Ben Macintyre

Ben Macintyre is an acclaimed historian, author and columnist. His bestselling book about Ewen Montagu and Charles Cholmondeley's hoax, *Operation Mincemeat*, has been adapted into a feature film of the same name, due for UK release on 14 January 2022

When was the existence of Operation Mincemeat first brought to light?
The story of the operation was first told by Ewen Montagu in his 1953 book *The Man Who Never Was* [subsequently adapted into a film in 1956]. However, it was the release of the classified MI5 'Mincemeat files' in 1996 that enabled a complete account to be written for the first time.

What, for you, was the most intriguing aspect of the operation?
The sheer level of jeopardy. The danger was not merely that it might not work; if the Germans had rumbled what was going on, they would have realised that they were being made to think Sicily was not the target of the Allied invasion, and that therefore it was. They would have poured troops onto the island and made it virtually impregnable. Before digging into the MI5 files, I had never realised quite how close it came to disaster.

Were you able to talk to any of the figures involved in the original operation as part of your research?
I had the huge pleasure of taking former MI5 clerk Jean Leslie, then in her wheelchair, down to the very spot on the Thames where the famous photograph of 'Pam' was taken [shown on page 59]. I also met several of the staff from Room 13 who could tell me exactly what it was like to prepare the deception. Alas, all are now dead.

How involved were you in the making of the new *Operation Mincemeat* film, and what was the most enjoyable part of seeing your book come to life?
I was closely involved with [director] John Madden and [screenwriter] Michelle Ashford in helping to shape the script at the beginning, and the historical detail, but they were responsible for bringing it to life on screen. This is the first of my books to be made into a film, and the process of seeing facts and events that I thought I knew well turned into another form has been utterly mesmerising, and hugely enjoyable. I thought I knew these characters. It is like meeting them all over again.

How significant do you think this episode was to the outcome of World War II? What might have happened had the Germans not been duped?
'What if' history is always dangerous. But I think it is fair to say, at the very least, that without Operation Mincemeat Hitler would not have diverted troops to Greece, making the invasion a great deal harder and slower – if not impossible. Had the deception been exposed as such, the outcome might well have been catastrophic, and altered the course of the war.

1. THE STEWARD
The household steward, rolling his eyes to heaven and making a gesture of despair, exits the room with a wad of unpaid bills. He is portrayed as a pious Methodist – a Christian sermon in his pocket – the antithesis to his master and mistress.

2. SECRET PAINTING
Behind a green curtain is, what we are led to assume, a painting of a naked woman. Risqué enough to be covered most of the time, just a bare ankle is on show, adding to the sexual intrigue of the painting.

3. CUPID
Usually a representation of love, this Cupid reflects the state of the couple's marriage. He is depicted among ruins, playing the bagpipes – an instrument often associated with discord – and missing a string in his bow.

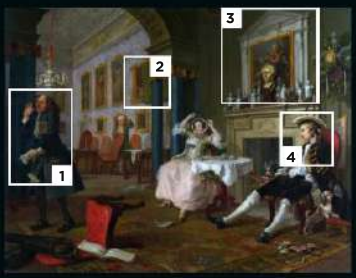
4. BLACK PATCH
The black patch on the side of the Viscount's neck was a device often used by Hogarth to indicate that its wearer was covering a syphilitic sore. The patch appears throughout the series; in the next scene, the Viscount is shown with his young mistress complaining to an apothecary that the mercury pills he had prescribed – then thought to cure syphilis – were not working.

WHAT GREAT PAINTINGS SAY

Hogarth's satirical series provided humour with a serious undertone

Marriage A-la-Mode: 2, The Tête à Tête

by William Hogarth, c1743–45



A quick glance at William Hogarth's oil on canvas work is enough to tell the viewer that all is not well in this 18th-century aristocratic household. The second in a six-part series, designed to illustrate the disastrous consequences of marrying for money rather than love, evidence of disorder, debauchery and disarray are scattered all around the expensive, yet garishly decorated, room.

"Hogarth's *Marriage A-la-Mode* series spoke to the social preoccupations of the time," says Alice Insley, assistant curator of historic British art at Tate Britain and co-curator of a current exhibition on the artist. "It's a classic tale of an aristocratic family that has fallen on hard times marrying into a wealthy merchant family who are looking to better their social standing: a marriage of convenience."

The union is clearly not a happy one. The clock to the right of the mantelpiece shows that it is past midday, yet there is little in the way of household activity. Viscount Squanderfield is slumped in a chair after a night of debauchery with his mistress – alluded to by the dog who is tugging a woman's muslin cap from his pocket and the lady's favour wrapped around his fallen sword. The Viscountess, too, seems to be feeling the effects of what, from the scattered cards on the floor, looks to have been a late evening of gaming. Even the servant in the adjoining room, his hair still in rollers, looks half asleep, stretching and yawning.

"This series is one of the finest examples of Hogarth's painting," says Insley, "and follows the couple's relationship from the brokering of their marriage to the tragic conclusion to their dissolute lives.

"Hogarth made a name for himself with these types of paintings – what he referred to as his modern moral series – and their contemporary themes struck a chord during a period of rapid social change in England.

"The market for art changed a great deal in the 18th century," Insley continues, "and even middle-class households could afford to line their walls with art, particularly prints, which were also common features in taverns and coffeehouses. It's no surprise, then, that Hogarth capitalised on England's burgeoning print-culture, initially painting the works so that they could be engraved, and then selling the engravings to subscribers for a guinea a set."

With almost every brushstroke, Hogarth painted a story of marital disharmony. The overturned chair and the two violins laying on top of each other suggest that someone has had to leave the room in a hurry and is one of several details – including the Viscountess' satisfied stretch and side-eyed look of apparent triumph – that indicate that the mistress of the house is also up to no good. Indeed, later in the series it is revealed that she is conducting an affair with the young lawyer, Silvertongue, who brokered the marriage.

All around are signs that this is a couple with more money than taste – from the grotesque buddha, cat and fish pastiche to the mantelpiece crammed with mismatched figurines, to the room's garish colour scheme. Money, Hogarth seems to say, does not necessarily bring happiness or, indeed, taste.

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

GET HOOKED

The Hogarth in Europe exhibition, which features all six works from the *Marriage A-la-Mode* series, runs until 20 March 2022 at Tate Britain. Visit *tate.org.uk/visit/tate-britain* for more information

GETTY IMAGES

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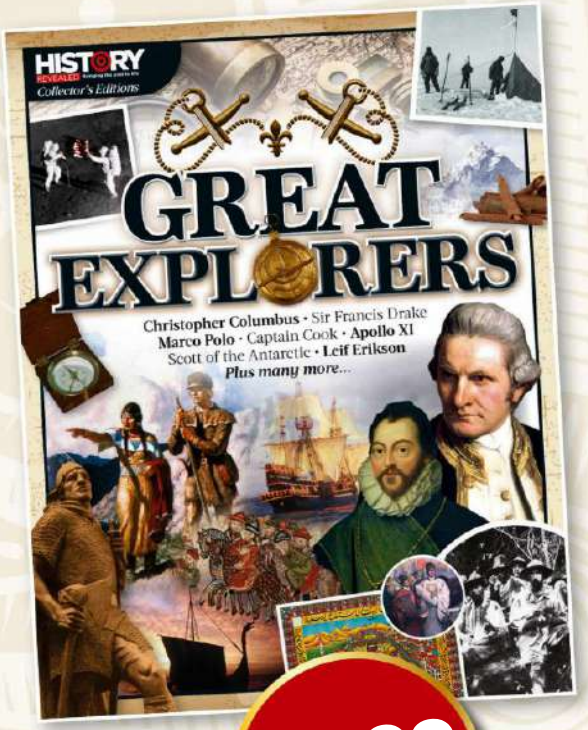
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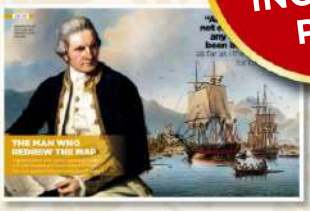

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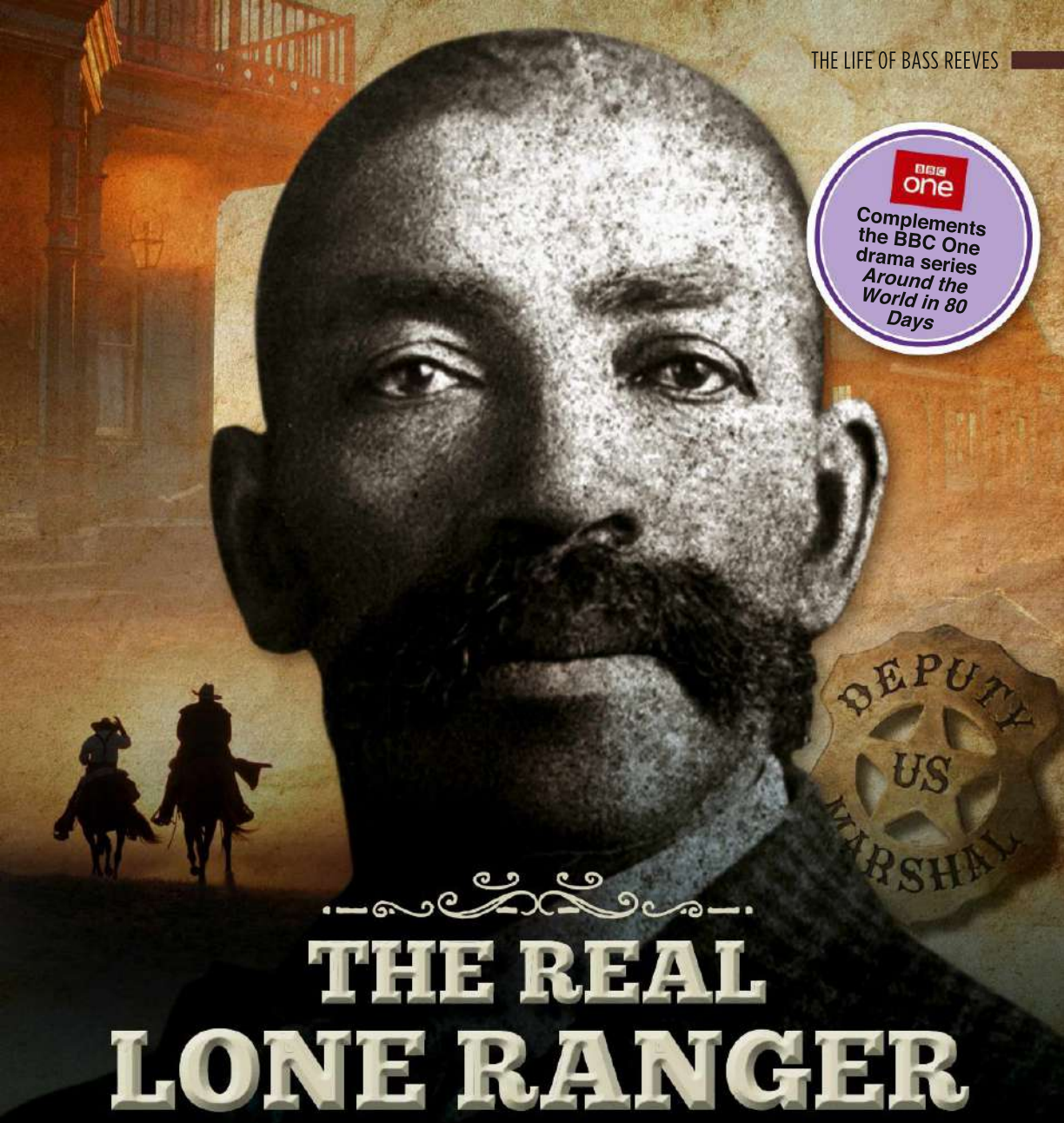

THE REAL LONE RANGER

Feared by felons and revered by his colleagues, Bass Reeves broke free from slavery to become one of the most successful lawmen in America's Wild West. Now immortalised as a character in a new BBC One series, **Nige Tassell** explores Reeves' incredible life story

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X2

It didn't seem an unusual altercation among off-duty Confederate soldiers during the early days of the American Civil War. An after-dark card game, a sense of injustice or cheating, a swift dispensing of physical retaliation. It happened often and regularly.

But this particular disagreement was unlike any other. It occurred between slave and 'master'. The contretemps was brutal and speedy; the enslaved man, Bass Reeves, battered the man he'd been forced to accompany into battle – George R Reeves, the future speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. As Bass' daughter Alice would later recall, her father "laid him out cold with his fist and then made a run for the Indian Territory north across the Red River".

For the next few years, Bass Reeves was the runaway slave looking over his shoulder. But the abolition of slavery, brought about by the resolution of the Civil War, would open doors for Reeves, ushering him towards a journey on which he would become a gun-toting public servant of the highest order. He would make history as a pioneering African-American US deputy marshal operating west of the Mississippi River, and one of the most feared lawmen charged with apprehending dangerous miscreants across the American West during the 19th century. He became known the 'Invincible Marshal'. Some believe his life and times were the basis for the fictional Lone Ranger.

BREAKING FROM BONDAGE

That Bass Reeves would become such a dedicated and celebrated lawman wasn't abundantly obvious from his early life. He was born into slavery in Arkansas in 1838, his family working in servitude for George Reeves' father, the state legislator William Reeves. When Reeves the elder moved to northern Texas, he took his enslaved people with him, among them eight-year-old Bass. At first, the youngster worked as a water boy before graduating to being a field hand. His skill with horses and mules then led to him becoming a blacksmith's assistant.

After passing into the 'ownership' of George Reeves, in his mid-twenties Bass found himself heading for the battlefields of the Civil War – and to the pivotal altercation at that card game. Having escaped to the Indian Territory, Bass lived among the Cherokee and the Seminoles, becoming fluent in their respective languages. When the 13th Amendment of the US Constitution abolished slavery in December 1865, Reeves could return to his home state of Arkansas a free man. (There is also a theory that, following his assault on George Reeves, he joined the Union army, rising to the rank of sergeant thanks to his translating skills.)

"REEVES WAS SAID TO KNOW THE TERRAIN LIKE A CHEF KNOWS THEIR KITCHEN"

A tall, strong man, the free Reeves initially worked in farming, but was soon earning extra money as a scout and tracker for law enforcement agencies. His deep knowledge of the geography of the Indian Territory, along with his fluency in certain Native languages, made Reeves an excellent asset in the struggle to keep peace in the ever-turbulent West. He was said to know the terrain like a chef knows their kitchen.

Reeves' work as a scout earned him such a reputation that, when the US marshal for the Indian Territory, James F Fagan, was charged with recruiting 200 deputy US marshals in 1875, Reeves was high on his list. He wouldn't be the only African-American deputy in the region at this time, but he was the first and he did become the most famous.

Reeves was appointed deputy US marshal for the Western District of Arkansas, a position that also carried responsibility for a portion of the Indian Territory. Here he would serve for the next 18 years, after which he transferred to the Eastern District of Texas, before serving at the Muskogee Federal Court.

MAIN: **An older Bass Reeves pictured with fellow members of the Muskogee Police Department, where he took on a role as a patrolman after retiring as a deputy US marshal**

INSET: **Reeves was enslaved by the Texas politician George Reeves (*pictured in c1881*) before escaping from his command during the Civil War**

A SUREFIRE SUCCESS

Serving as a lawman for more than three decades, his legend resonated loud and clear across the landscape. The felons that Reeves rode the badlands in search of were all well aware of the giant who was on their tail. Not that his fearsome

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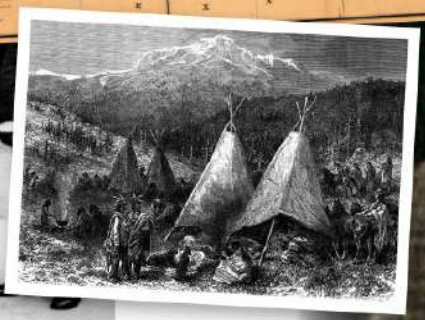


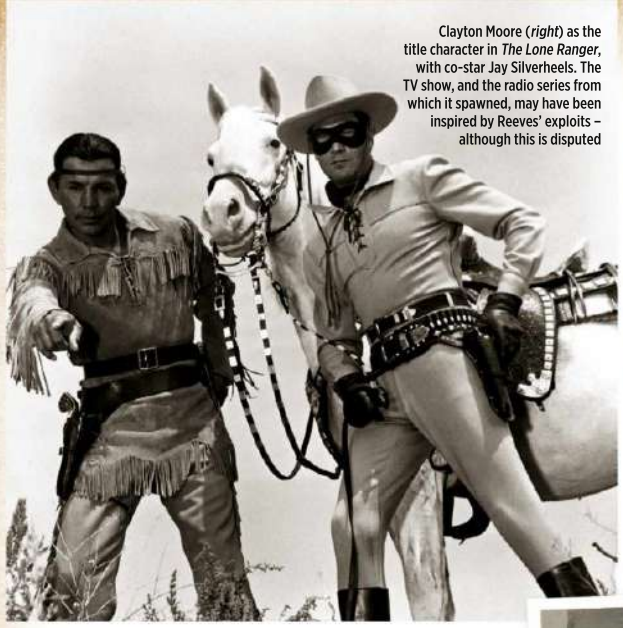
ABOVE: **Native peoples were more willing to trust Bass Reeves than his white counterparts**

TOP: **An 1887 map showing the so-called 'Indian Territory' west of the Mississippi – an area Reeves knew well**

reputation stopped these outlaws publicly goading him. Mainly wanted for horse rustling, bootlegging or murder, these unsavoury characters would issue warnings for deputy marshals in the form of small cards left on trails, cautioning particular lawmen that their lives were in danger if they proceeded with their pursuit. Unsurprisingly for a man of such repute, Reeves was a regular recipient of these threats; he collected a dozen cards that carried warnings for his particular personal safety.

He would, however, have required some assistance in reading the messages himself. Reeves remained illiterate throughout his life, a rare situation for a deputy, as the position required a fair degree of administration and record-keeping to be completed in the line of duty. But such was his untarnished standing as both hunter and detective that he resisted any attempts to be taught how to read or write. Over the course of his career, Reeves killed 14 felons in the line of duty, each in an act of self-defence. Rather incredibly, he never received so much as a flesh wound himself. The closest he came to being injured in his work was having his hat shot off once or twice.

An undated photograph of Reeves. The lawman's career spanned three decades, during which time he faced frequent threats to his life from hardened criminals



Clayton Moore (*right*) as the title character in *The Lone Ranger*, with co-star Jay Silverheels. The TV show, and the radio series from which it spawned, may have been inspired by Reeves' exploits – although this is disputed

MAIN: Delroy Lindo (*right*) stars as Bass Reeves alongside Jonathan Majors in *The Harder They Fall* – a film loosely based on real stories from the Wild West

BELOW: Mugshot photographs of Reeves' son, Bennie, taken shortly after being arrested by his father on suspicion of murder in 1902

A man of great physical strength and who sported a distinctive, luxuriant moustache, Reeves' marksmanship was impeccable. Although no slouch with a rifle, he was most adept when handling his two six-shooters. One observer likened the speed of his pistol skills to that of "a Methodist preacher reaching for a platter of fried chicken during Sunday dinner at the deacon's house".

Aside from his expertise with firearms, Reeves was also a tremendously gifted detective and arrested more than 3,000 suspects during his time as a deputy. Somewhat counterintuitively, his success was partly due to the fractured racial make-up of the American West at the time. The historian Daniel F Littlefield Jr has suggested that "the Indian Territory became his beat, in part, because of racism. The Indians, Indian Freemen and African-American criminals in Indian Territory preferred being taken in by someone who was not white to being taken in by someone who was."

Reeves' dedication to public service was such that he didn't even baulk at having to arrest his own son Bennie on suspicion of killing his wife. After being captured and arrested by his father, Bennie was subsequently tried and convicted of the murder – and then had to serve 11 years behind bars.

That particular episode wouldn't be the only time that a member of Reeves' immediate family found themselves in the dock on a murder charge. In 1887, Reeves himself was in this position, having shot and killed a posse cook. He maintained his innocence, explaining that his gun had been accidentally discharged while being cleaned. Reeves' impeccable record of public service went before him again and he was acquitted, although he had been forced to sell his house in order to afford his legal fees. His counsel was the former US attorney WHH Clayton.

MAKING A KILLING

That Reeves was able to detain so many suspects, to rack up captures in such high numbers, was down to his set-up on the trails. Like his fellow deputies, he wasn't riding unaided; he wasn't that mythical lone ranger. He travelled alongside a wagon, and with a posseman, a guard and a cook for company. The presence of the wagon allowed for multiple arrests, with the prisoners shackled to it on a long chain. As many as 30 outlaws could be detained and transported back to the relevant courthouse in this way.

Reeves' motivation in amassing such an impressive arrest record might not have been solely altruistic, for the wider good of the region. Deputies could make decent money. The government paid them 75 cents a day to feed each captured prisoner, along with a mileage expense of 10 cents for every mile that each was transported. Sometimes the expedition to catch a particular wanted list of outlaws wasn't fleeting; the deputy and his entourage – plus the captured prisoners shackled to the wagon – might be on the trails for up to a month at a time. A deputy as professional and efficient as Reeves could expect to earn a minimum of $400 for such a trip. On one notable expedition, Reeves banked a cool $900 after capturing 17 outlaws and transporting them back to the courthouse at Fort Smith in Arkansas.

"THE DEPUTY DIDN'T EVEN BAULK AT HAVING TO ARREST HIS OWN SON"

The stories emanating from Reeves' highly impressive arrest record has drawn comparison with those of another immensely productive lawman – the fictional (and white) Lone Ranger. Indeed, a number of observers have posited the notion that Reeves was actually the prototype of the one-time television hero.

The main proponent of this school of thought is Reeves' biographer Art T

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OATH OF OFFICE.

I, Bass Reeves, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute all lawful precepts, directed to the Marshal of the United States for the Western District of Arkansas, under the authority of the United States, and true returns make, and in all things well and truly, and without malice or partiality, perform the duties of Deputy Marshal of the Western District of Arkansas during my continuance in said office, and take only my lawful fees, so help me God.

Bass Reeves [L.S.]

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29 day of May 1889

Judge Said Court Western Dist

An oath of office sworn by Bass Reeves while serving as a deputy marshal in 1889. However, given that the lawman was illiterate, it is not clear whether he signed the paper himself

Burton, who presents the connections between the two marshals in his book *Black Gun, Silver Star*, citing that they both rode light-coloured horses and that many of Reeves' captives were sent to the Detroit House of Corrections – the same city where the *Lone Ranger* radio series was first broadcast on a local station.

Whether or not Burton's hypothesis is correct, he is almost certainly accurate in his claims that "Bass Reeves is the closest real person to resemble the fictional Lone Ranger on the American western frontier of the 19th century". Indeed, no other real-life deputy enjoyed the awe in which Reeves was held, nor the widespread circulation of the near-mythical tales of his captures.

And now, in the 21st century, his legend is currently enjoying a double dose of exposure. In *The Harder They Fall*, a just-released film portraying a predominantly African-American cast of cowboys, outlaws and lawmen, Reeves is played by Delroy Lindo. Reeves also appears in the new BBC adaptation of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*. Portrayed by the British actor Gary Beadle (*see box, right*), Reeves unexpectedly encounters Phileas Fogg and his travelling companions on board a stagecoach, and ends up drawing them into his fight to bring a criminal to justice.

More than a century after Reeves' death in 1910, his legend continues to grow in strength. And for good reason. His life story remains an irresistible one; the tale of a man who escaped a life of servitude and rose to become a public official who both controlled the lawless frontiers of his country and shaped their future. As such, Bass Reeves will always be one of the first great post-slavery African-American heroes. A Wild West hero, indeed.

GET HOOKED

WATCH

BBC one

Gary Beadle stars as Bass Reeves in the new eight-part drama series *Around the World in 80 Days*, which is currently airing on BBC One and BBC iPlayer

Q&A
Gary Beadle

British actor Gary Beadle plays Bass Reeves in *Around the World in 80 Days*, which is currently airing on BBC One and BBC iPlayer

What research did you do for the role of Bass Reeves?
I gathered a lot of information online to get a feel of his achievements. I was surprised to discover that he had 11 children, and more importantly, made more than 3,000 arrests for the US government. He was a real Wild West man.

How do you think Bass Reeves was shaped by his experiences of slavery?
Like a lot of people who have been oppressed, Reeves wanted to right all the wrongs he could see; he must have felt that representing the law would go a certain way towards doing that. That type of empowerment must have felt like a calling on a biblical level for him.

How should he be remembered?
Reeves brought a truthfulness and an honesty that is brutal and insightful for those of us who want to understand more about how the West was won. From slave to sheriff, it's our duty to share Reeves with a new audience.

Gary Beadle (*pictured right, with co-star John Light*) portrays Reeves in the new BBC One series *Around the World in 80 Days*, inspired by the Jules Verne novel of the same name

WHAT IF... BRITAIN HAD REMAINED NEUTRAL IN WWI?

Professor David Stevenson tells **Jonny Wilkes** how a lack of British involvement during World War I would have led to likely German victory and affected a multitude of issues around the globe – from women's suffrage to Indian independence

The catalyst for Britain entering World War I was in the manner of Germany's strategy. The Schlieffen Plan was intended to allow the German army to attack and knock out France quickly before turning its full attention eastwards to slow-mobilising Russia, but for this to work meant going through Belgium. As the 1839 Treaty of London assured the protection of Belgian neutrality by European powers, including Britain, such an invasion could not be tolerated. So it was Germany's desire for speed that brought its enemies into the war.

Yet the invasion of Belgium did not make British intervention inevitable, says David Stevenson, professor of international history at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and author of *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*. "Prime Minister HH Asquith's cabinet took the view that Britain was not legally obliged to help Belgium," he says. If the Germans, rather than going right through the middle, went through the southeastern tip through the Ardennes, or if the Belgians had not resisted as they did and asked for assistance, then "it would have been harder to justify the position for Britain to enter the war".

If Britain had remained neutral, the likely result of World War I would have been a German victory. That does not mean a quick-fire sweeping aside as laid out in the Schlieffen Plan: the Germans would have needed a long time to beat France, which had vastly expanded its army and invested in railroads to ensure swift mobilisation. Stevenson says: "Even if the British had not been at the first battle of the Marne [in September 1914], it is reasonable to assume that the French would have stopped the Germans."

The fighting that followed would have still featured the trenches, since the Western Front did get bogged down quickly, asserts Stevenson. Perhaps they'd be slightly closer to Paris, settling down 50 or 60 miles away instead of 75 miles. And even without Britain, its empire and the US getting involved, Germany would have faced a war on two fronts. In the end, though, France could not have carried on a long war with the costs, resources and attrition this required. "At some point in 1915 or 1916, there would have been a compromise peace that favoured the Germans."

DOMESTIC DILEMMAS

Now, the British – having avoided three-quarters of a million dead, and a larger number of wounded and traumatised – would have faced a hostile Germany at the apex of its power. Although weakened in the short term, Germany and its militaristic kaiser, Wilhelm II, would have been looking to resume the naval arms race it had started with Britain in the decade before the war.

With Germans ensconced in Belgium with naval bases on the coast, "then the British would have felt really threatened", says Stevenson. Not content with that, the German leadership would have also set its sights on colonial expansion. Indeed, the acquisition of French colonies in central Africa would have been the likely result of any peace to begin with.

But British concerns would have not stopped there. In 1914, Ireland was perilously close to civil war, with both the Irish nationalists and the unionists importing weapons and preparing for violence. Asquith's government had been dependent since 1910 on the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which wanted Home Rule (Irish

IN CONTEXT

When the Austrian-Hungarian heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sophie were assassinated by a Bosnian Serb on 28 June 1914, many British people considered the ensuing crisis to be a distant concern; not one to trouble a superpower ruling over a quarter of the world's population. But the complex networks of European alliances were soon being consolidated, including France and Russia, with whom Britain had friendly relations, and Germany gave Austria-Hungary a 'blank cheque' assurance of support so they could declare war on Serbia.

Britain had grown threatened by the nascent Germany, and when Kaiser Wilhelm II launched his own war on France by invading Belgium, there was need for decisive action as Belgian independence and neutrality had been guaranteed by a treaty in 1839. On 4 August, an ultimatum was issued to Germany, but when this went ignored, Britain and its empire entered the conflict: a four-year world war of unprecedented brutality and bloodshed.

The killing of Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, would have ramifications few could have predicted

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1

LEFT: Crowds gather in London on 4 August 1914, eager to hear whether Germany has responded to Britain's demands to withdraw from Belgium

MAIN: British troops pictured during the first battle of the Marne in 1914 – an early victory for the Allies

self-government) as a prelude to independence. The world war actually created something of a truce between the two sides, so British neutrality could have led to increased tensions.

The passage of women's suffrage could have also looked different in Britain. Assuming the suffragettes continued their campaigns of direct action, which actually may have hurt their cause in the years before the war, "it's reasonable to say that suffrage would not have come as early as it did", says Stevenson. Finally, the trade union militancy, seen in massive strikes and working-class unrest in strategic industries, might well have continued unabated, too.

Truly, the counterfactual threads that unwind from a neutral Britain and a German victory in World War I are staggering – and unknowable. Would the Russian Revolution still have taken place? How would a different result in the war have changed the political landscape in the Middle East? And what would have been the impact on the British empire?

DID YOU KNOW?

BRITAIN OUTMANNED

At the start of World War I in 1914, Germany fielded about 1.7 million men on the Western Front; France about 2 million. Perhaps surprisingly, the British Expeditionary Force numbered a mere 90,000 men.

"ALTHOUGH WEAKENED, GERMANY WOULD HAVE BEEN LOOKING TO REVIVE ITS NAVAL ARMS RACE WITH BRITAIN"

A DELAYED ARRIVAL?

One factor that would have looked different, according to Stevenson, was the Indian nationalist movement. It grew considerably between 1914–18, persuading the British to make concessions including "a declaration in 1917 promising 'responsible government' for India". It is difficult to see this occurring had Britain stayed out of the war.

As for Germany, a victory would have undoubtedly meant that any economic downturn in the 1920s would not have been as debilitating as the Great Depression proved. This, in turn, could have stopped Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rising to power.

And yet, it could be argued that none of this would have happened. Britain was bound to join the war eventually. The decision to be neutral could have split the Liberal government and resulted in a coalition representing those from all political parties who were committed to British involvement. Or sending arms to the French could have put British shipping in danger of German attacks, which could also have brought the nation, and empire, into the war.

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4

The BBC Radio 4 series *1914: Day by Day* chronicles the events leading up to World War I: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03t8m6h*

NEXT MONTH

What if... the French Revolution had failed?

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A MIXED LEGACY
Millions of Americans mark Thanksgiving by enjoying a turkey dinner with their family. But for some people, the anniversary of the Pilgrims' 1621 feast is no cause for celebration

2.8
The amount, in cents, paid per acre in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The United States bought a total of 828,000 square miles of territory from the French.

GENERATIONAL TRAUMA
Chali'Naru Dones, a member of the Taino people, recites a prayer on 2020's National Day of Mourning

What is the National Day of Mourning?

SHORT ANSWER While most Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, many others struggle to give thanks

LONG ANSWER Every fourth Thursday in November, tens of millions of Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, chiefly by devouring a huge turkey meal and watching parades or American football. The national holiday marks the harvest feast shared between the Pilgrims (the colonists who came over on the *Mayflower*) and the Wampanoag people in 1621.

But the day has also come to be known as a National Day of Mourning for Native American communities in New England. To them, Thanksgiving is not a cause for celebration. It is a reminder of the heinous acts perpetrated by generations of European settlers and then the US government: genocide, land stealing, and relentless attacks on their cultures and livelihoods.

In 1970, Wamsutta, an elder of the Aquinnah Wampanoag, was invited to a Thanksgiving state dinner in Plymouth, Massachusetts – the site of the Pilgrims' colony – and asked to give a speech, which had to be approved first. When his impassioned indictment of the white conquest of native lands was, perhaps unsurprisingly, deemed to be inflammatory, Wamsutta then declined the invitation.

Instead, the elder led a protest to Cole's Hill and declared the first National Day of Mourning. Today, the United American Indians of New England (UAINE) organise a march and rally to honour their ancestors and educate the public about why Thanksgiving should not just be about giving 'thanks'.

GETTY IMAGES X2

FLOATING AN IDEA
A 15th-century depiction of Theseus' ship. The vessel is the subject of a thought puzzle that has fascinated philosophers for hundreds of years

What was the ship of Theseus?

SHORT ANSWER The meaning of the ship has been changed and added to over the centuries, which seems apt

LONG ANSWER The obvious answer is that it was the ship belonging to Theseus, the Greek warrior who slayed the Minotaur and became King of Athens. The more complete answer is that it is a philosophical thought experiment about the nature of identity. Ancient thinkers like Plutarch posed the question: when parts of Theseus' wooden ship were damaged or rotten and had to be replaced, was it still the same ship?

What if every single part of the original ship was replaced – was that still Theseus' ship? These questions proved so intriguing that they survived longer than any real Greek vessel. The 17th-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes added another: if the materials that had been replaced were then used to make another ship, which one belonged to Theseus? It remains a headscratcher, for sure, which is why neither Plutarch nor Hobbes came up with a conclusive answer.

2

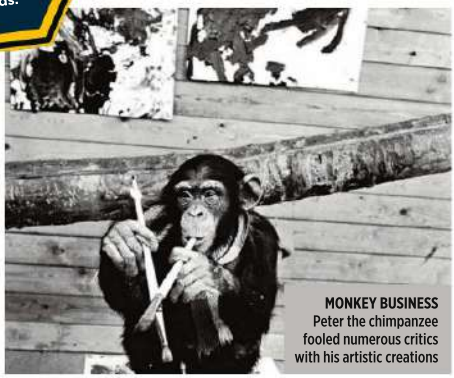
The number of plane crashes that American novelist Ernest Hemingway survived over two days in 1954. "My luck, she is running very good," he declared afterwards.

Who was Pierre Brassau?

SHORT ANSWER An upcoming artist in the 1960s – as long as he got paid in bananas

LONG ANSWER Pierre Brassau was an exciting avant-garde artist from France, discovered by a Swedish journalist named Ake 'Dacke' Axelsson in 1964. "Brassau paints with powerful strokes, but also with clear determination... an artist who performs with the delicacy of a ballet dancer," was the opinion of one esteemed critic.

Except, there was no Pierre Brassau. The whole thing was a hoax by Axelsson, wishing to bring art critics down a peg, and the paintings had been done by a four-year-old chimpanzee named Peter. Handed a brush, paint and paper in his enclosure at Boras Zoo, in Sweden, Peter made a heap of monkey masterpieces, before Axelsson chose the best four for an exhibition. It seemed he didn't fool everyone, though, as another critic asserted: "Only an ape could have done this."



MONKEY BUSINESS
Peter the chimpanzee fooled numerous critics with his artistic creations

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2

FIGHTING IT OUT TO THE DEATH
Maximus (Russell Crowe) and Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) face off in *Gladiator*. The real-life Commodus 'fought' hundreds of opponents

Did Commodus fight a gladiator?

SHORT ANSWER The movie *Gladiator* got it wrong: he didn't fight one bout, but 735

LONG ANSWER The finale of Ridley Scott's historical masterpiece *Gladiator* sees the titular hero Maximus take on Emperor Commodus in the Colosseum, with the fate of Rome depending on who strikes the killer blow. While there is of course a hefty dose of dramatic licence here, the real-life Commodus was no stranger to the gladiatorial arena.

Seeing himself as Hercules reborn – he had statues made with him dressed in a lion's fur and wielding a club, like the Greek hero – Commodus fought in 735 bouts, according to the *Historia Augusta*. Don't be too impressed, though: there was no chance of him coming to harm, as his opponents – who were often wounded or infirm – weren't going to take a swipe at the emperor. When not 'fighting' gladiators, Commodus slaughtered animals in huge numbers (and often from a distance using bows or spears). Supposedly, he killed 100 lions in a single day.

BUMPER CARS
A pair of vehicles collide during an auto polo match in Florida, 1928. The sport would die out only a few years later

How did auto polo work?

SHORT ANSWER Two teams in four cars, two goals, two mallets, one ball... and next to no health and safety

LONG ANSWER There's standard equestrian polo, there's water polo and there's even elephant polo. In the United States of the 1910s and 1920s, however, there was a frantic and foolhardy version of the sport that surely wins the 'most dangerous polo' award. Auto polo, you may be able to guess, was played with cars – so fewer horses and more horsepower.

A team of two cars, stripped of non-essentials like doors, roofs and windshields, each had two players on board: a driver and a malletman. The aim was to hit a basketball with croquet-like mallets into the opposition goal, while at the same time essentially playing dodgems. As matches could end with the vehicles as total write-offs, it was actually more like a demolition derby with hammers.

The cars tore around at high speeds, making for big crashes and frequent injuries. No wonder one motoring publication called auto polo a "lunatic game". Still, from its apparent debut in July 1912 – when the 'Red Devils' took on the 'Gray Ghosts' in front of 5,000 spectators in Wichita, Kansas – leagues soon sprouted up across the country. But the sport was shortlived, dying out in the 1920s as the cost of keeping the cars match-day ready ultimately proved too much.

DID YOU KNOW?

DEATHLY DIAGNOSIS

The English surgeon Joseph Henry Green kept his medical mind right to the very end. While lying on his deathbed in 1863, the 72-year-old was checking his pulse until he uttered his final word: "Stopped."

BOWLED OVER

The famous cowboy hat worn in every Western movie, be it an authentic Stetson or an imitation, was not the usual headgear in America's Old West. Instead, men preferred to sport a bowler, or a top hat.

BAAAA-D TIMES

For more than 70 years, sheep were kept in New York City's Central Park. They were removed in 1934, partly to make way for a restaurant, and because it was feared those struggling with the Great Depression might steal them for food.

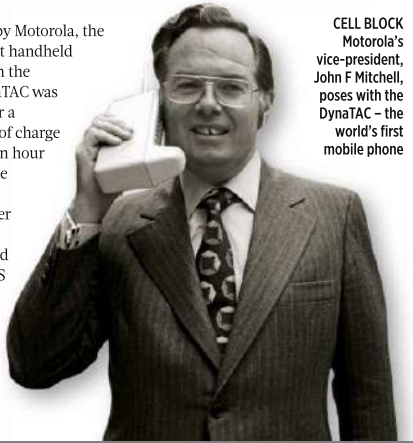
DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH

Saint Catherine of Siena nursed the sick, including lepers and plague victims, but she arguably got too close to dangerous illnesses: she once drank the pus from the cancerous wound of a woman in her care.

When was the first mobile call?

SHORT ANSWER The inaugural call in 1973 was just to boast

LONG ANSWER Produced by Motorola, the world's first handheld mobile phone was a far cry from the smartphones of today. The DynaTAC was 23cm by 13cm big, weighed over a kilogram, and needed 10 hours of charge for a 30-minute call. Still, half an hour was ample for the purpose of the first-ever call. On 3 April 1973, Motorola engineer Martin Cooper stood on a Manhattan sidewalk with press and onlookers around him, and made a call to Dr Joel S Engel, a rival from Bell Labs. Cooper just wanted to let Engel know that he was talking on a mobile phone.



CELL BLOCK
Motorola's vice-president, John F Mitchell, poses with the DynaTAC – the world's first mobile phone

Where does 'quarantine' come from?

SHORT ANSWER People were advised to self-isolate to stop the Black Death

LONG ANSWER The Black Death came to Europe through trading ships, notably the galleys that pulled into the Sicilian port of Messina in October 1347, so it is fitting that the word 'quarantine' originates from the policy imposed on such ships to stop the spread of the mass-killer disease. Crews arriving at port cities, like Venice, were told to isolate for weeks before they could disembark. The first practice demanded 30 days, but this was increased and became known as quarantine, coming from the Italian 'Quaranta giorni', which means 40 days.

FATAL ENCOUNTER The first European depiction of the Māori people, found in Abel Tasman's 1642 travel journal

55,573

The number of RAF Bomber Command personnel killed in action during World War II, which amounted to a mortality rate of 44.4 per cent.

What happened when Europeans first met the Māori?

SHORT ANSWER Note to Abel Tasman: cannon fire may not be the best way to say hello

LONG ANSWER At the top of New Zealand's South Island is Abel Tasman National Park, named after the first European to sight the land – despite him never stepping foot on it. Dutch explorer Abel Tasman recorded the literal landmark on 13 December 1642, and five days later he had the first meeting with the native people, the Māori. As first impressions go, it could have gone better.

Men from the Ngāti Tūmatakōkiri paddled out to his anchored ships in four *waka*, or canoes, and performed ritual incantations and let out a few blasts from their horns. Tasman's crew one-upped this display with their own trumpets and cannon fire. The Māori saw this as an act of aggression, and the next day they attacked the Dutch, killing four sailors. Before making a hasty retreat, Tasman named the place Murderers Bay, and it would be nearly 130 years before Europeans met the Māori again, during Captain James Cook's famous expedition of 1769.

What powers did the Witan have?

SHORT ANSWER The Anglo-Saxon advisory council had the ability to influence the king's most important decisions

LONG ANSWER In 1066, Harold Godwinson was able to take the throne of England – briefly, at least – as a result of having the backing of the Witan. The Anglo-Saxon council, also known as the Witenagemont, was made up of nobles, such as ealdormen and thegns, and high-ranking clergy like archbishops, and would advise the king on matters of state. Anything could be discussed, from royal grants of land and taxation to foreign policy and war. Like with Harold, the Witan also controlled the succession.

This was no parliament, though. The Witan was not elected, did not meet formally, and the king was not bound to its decisions. But the king needed the support of the Witan: it was the nobles and clergy who took laws across the lands and enforced them.

UNDER THE influence An 11th-century illustration of a king with his Witan. The council would have included the most powerful nobles in the land

What made Suleiman 'magnificent'?

SULTAN OF BLING Suleiman the Magnificent's reign ushered in a golden age for the Ottoman empire

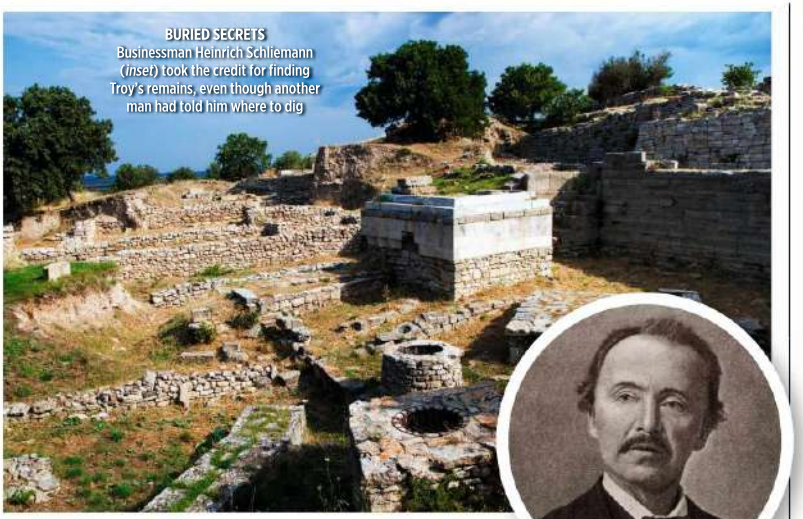
SHORT ANSWER The long-reigning Sultan brought wealth and success to the Ottoman empire

LONG ANSWER No one ruled the Ottoman empire longer than Suleiman, who was sultan for 46 years. The length of his reign was one thing, but Suleiman used that time to carry out military campaigns that extended Ottoman power, enact major reforms, and herald a golden age of culture.

In the years immediately after becoming sultan, he led his armies against Christian forces at Belgrade and the island of Rhodes, then brought Hungary to heel, too. He oversaw the expansion of the empire over much of the Middle East and swathes of North Africa as far as Algeria. Suleiman modernised administration and instituted law reforms – earning him another nickname, 'Suleiman the Lawgiver'.

The Ottoman empire reached a military, political and economic peak under Suleiman. True, his heirs couldn't keep up the good work once he was gone in 1566, but that actually served to ensure his personal legacy as, well, magnificent.

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X3



BURIED SECRETS
Businessman Heinrich Schliemann (*inset*) took the credit for finding Troy's remains, even though another man had told him where to dig

Who discovered Troy?

SHORT ANSWER A German businessman had the ambition, money and brawn; a British archaeologist had the brains

LONG ANSWER In the millennia since the legendary war that wiped Troy off the map, there were those who thought the whole thing to be a myth, and others who believed in the existence of the civilisation of Hector, Paris, and a gullibility towards oversized gifts that look like they may have some Greek soldiers inside.

Heinrich Schliemann was in the latter group. A wealthy German businessman, he set out in 1868 with his copy of the *Iliad*, certain that the words of Homer would point him in the right direction.

It wasn't Homer, but a British archaeologist named Frank Calvert who showed Schliemann where to dig. While Calvert was convinced that the mysterious mound of Hisarlik in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) held the answer, he didn't have any funds. Schliemann had plenty.

In 1871, excavations unearthed nine layers of civilisations built on top of one another, and Schliemann declared the oldest to be the Troy of Greek mythology. He was both right and wrong: Troy had been found, but it was the sixth layer that dated from the right time, 1500–1000 BC. Schliemann became a celebrity, although he conveniently failed to give any credit to Calvert, who could be argued to be Troy's true discoverer.

What happened to Anne Boleyn's body?

SHORT ANSWER If you ever needed proof that Henry VIII moved on quickly from each spurned queen...

LONG ANSWER Once wife number two of Henry VIII had been relieved of her head on 19 May 1536, not many people seemed to mind what happened to the body. No provisions had been made, so Anne Boleyn had to be carried away by her ladies-in-waiting, before being placed in a hastily found chest used for storing arrows and buried in the royal chapel of Saint Peter ad Vincula.

In 1876, excavations were made as part of repair works at the Tower of London and a skeleton was found of a "female between 25 and 30 years of age, of a delicate frame of body, and who had been of slender and perfect proportions". Identified as Boleyn, it was reburied and given a proper marker.

But it probably wasn't her: there were plenty of bodies missing their heads in that area. The more likely candidate was another skeleton unearthed and reburied as Lady Rochford.

A QUICK CHOP
Anne Boleyn was beheaded with a single stroke of the executioner's sword

Why was there a riot over watermelons?

SHORT ANSWER A slice of watermelon in Panama City in 1856 cost only a few cents... or a deadly riot

LONG ANSWER On 15 April 1856, a train arrived in Panama City bearing 1,000 Americans bound for California. The long journey and ensuing wait to board a ship meant they had time on their hands, which many used to go drinking. One passenger, Jack Oliver, drunkenly got in a confrontation when he took a slice of watermelon from a local vendor, Jose Manuel Luna, and refused to pay. Luna pulled a knife, Oliver a gun. A fight broke out and a shot was fired.

That was enough for the Panamanians, who started rioting. Resentment had been building for a while, since the US used the thin stretch of Panama to cross from the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, which was handy for Americans heading west. The rioters targeted US businesses and even the police joined in. When order was finally restored, 15 Americans and two Panamanians were dead and dozens more wounded.

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ONE TO WATCH

The Gilded Age stars Louisa Jacobson (*left*) as Marian Brook – a young Pennsylvanian finding her feet in 1880s New York City. Along the way she strikes up a friendship with writer Peggy Scott, played by Denée Benton (*right*)

The cast also features Cynthia Nixon and Christine Baranski as Marian's aunts (*below*), plus Morgan Spector and Carrie Coon as wealthy couple George and Bertha Russell (*bottom*)

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The shock of the new

The Gilded Age / Sky Atlantic, Tuesday 25 January

The late 19th century was a time of huge changes in the US, especially in the north and west of the country. In the wake of the Civil War, the rapidly industrialising economy in these areas boomed. As a new kind of society came into focus, wages for workers rose far higher than in Europe, but this was also a time of growing inequalities, of industrial unrest, and when vast fortunes were won and lost.

In short, it's the kind of era that has long drawn the attention of *Downton Abbey* creator Julian Fellowes, who is both writer and creator of *The Gilded Age*, a big-budget nine-part drama co-produced by HBO and set in New York City during the 1880s.

The story begins in 1882, when Marian Brook (Louisa Jacobson, Meryl Streep's daughter, making her screen debut), the orphaned daughter of a Union general, moves from rural Pennsylvania to Manhattan. Here she goes to stay with her aunts, proud aristocrat Agnes van Rhijn and spinster Ada Brook, played respectively by Christine Baranski (*The Good Wife*) and Cynthia Nixon (*Sex and the City*).

All of which sounds perfectly privileged and lovely for Marian, except that not only is she penniless but she also walks into the middle of a social war between one of her aunts and her fabulously wealthy neighbours, the robber baron railroad tycoon George Russell (Morgan Spector) and his wife, Bertha (Carrie Coon). A recurring scenario in Fellowes' work down the years, it's a case of old money versus new, with the writer scrutinising the attitudes of all concerned.

Other characters in the ensemble cast include Peggy Scott (Denée Benton), an aspiring writer educated at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia. Peggy and Marian, both seeking a fresh start, meet at the train station and so begins an unlikely friendship.

English actor Lupino Lane performs 'The Lambeth Walk' in a 1937 production of *Me and My Girl*. Greg Jenner (*inset*) discusses the song and its associated dance craze in an episode of *Past Forward*

The way we were

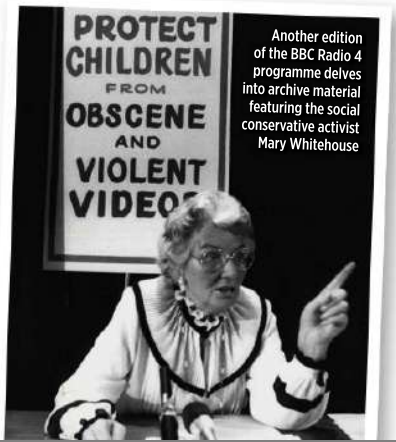
Past Forward / BBC Radio 4, Monday 3 January

In 2022, the British Broadcasting Corporation celebrates its centenary. As you might expect, Auntie is making much of this anniversary, with special programmes across its network. There will certainly be big-budget highlights ahead, but also shows that more modestly reflect the depth and richness of the BBC's archives.

Enter Greg Jenner (*You're Dead to Me*) with *Past Forward*, a show based on the idea of the historian using a random date generator to find a specific moment in the BBC archive. Each show begins with Jenner listening to a clip that acts as a starting point on a journey towards our own time. While the series will take in events that made the news, it also promises to illuminate the lives of ordinary Britons down the years.

One of the programmes, for example, begins with a clip of Mary Whitehouse (1910–2001), a conservative activist who campaigned against depictions of sex in the cinema, theatre and on television. It's the starting point for a wider discussion of the changing attitudes to privacy with social historian David Vincent. To what extent, asks the programme, can we maintain private spaces and intimate relationships in a digital era when so many parts of our lives are played out online?

Other shows take in 'The Lambeth Walk' and, all being well, a famous comedian's personal connection to this 1930s dance craze; and a 1962 clip about the research facility Porton Down, which acts as a starting point for looking at both medical ethics in the Cold War era and how deference helped the British state to keep secrets.



Another edition of the BBC Radio 4 programme delves into archive material featuring the social conservative activist Mary Whitehouse

A song to Drella

Andy Warhol's America / BBC Two, January

Born in 1928, the year before the Wall Street Crash, Andy Warhol lived through World War II and the social upheavals of the 1960s. He died in 1987, aged 58, during Ronald Reagan's second term as US president.

Throughout these years, his output, whether as a working-class young pop artist painting *Campbell's Soup Cans* and on the hustle for attention, or as an older man moving in high-society cultural circles, offered a running commentary on a changing America in the 20th century.

Over three episodes, *Andy Warhol's America* explores how Warhol reacted to what he saw happening around him, for example, how he became obsessed with Richard Nixon's visit to China or, in later life, grew concerned by the inequalities he saw around him and helped out in a soup kitchen.

The latest series of *Digging for Britain*, presented by Professor Alice Roberts (*inset*), showcases a number of recent excavations – including that of a Roman mosaic in Rutland (*main*)

GETTY IMAGES X3, FRAN MONKS X1, HISTORIC ENGLAND ARCHIVE X1, RARE TV X1, NEAL STREET PRODUCTIONS X1

Changing times

Call the Midwife / BBC One, January

There's more than a grain of truth in the idea that the Swinging Sixties was a cultural phenomenon that didn't impact on as many people's lives as we sometimes imagine. And yet there were real changes within wider society, most notably in the middle of the decade, when Roy Jenkins was home secretary.

Despite serving less than two years (1965–67) in the role under Labour prime minister Harold Wilson, Jenkins paved the way for reforms that liberalised abortion laws, decriminalised homosexuality and relaxed the rules around getting divorced. These were seen as radical measures that would come to have a huge impact on ordinary people's lives.

Considering the 11th series of *Call the Midwife* is set in 1967, we can expect this changing social landscape to be reflected in a series that deals with difficult issues rather more often than its feel-good reputation suggests.

Following the Christmas special, we rejoin the baby wranglers of Nonnatus House in the spring, where preparations are underway for an Easter parade. Elsewhere, Trixie (Helen George) is shocked when building work reveals a terrible secret and newly qualified Nancy (Megan Cusack) gets set to don her red cardigan for the first time. Plus, Sister Monica Joan (Judy Parfitt) and Reggie (Daniel Laurie) are excited about watching the upcoming Eurovision song contest. This, remember, was the year when Britain's entry was the Sandie Shaw earworm, 'Puppet on a String'.

The new series of *Call the Midwife* welcomes back some familiar faces from Nonnatus House, including Trixie Franklin (Helen George), as well as a plethora of bouncing babies (*above*)

What lies beneath

Digging for Britain / BBC Two, January

Since the first series was broadcast back in 2010, *Digging for Britain* has become essential viewing for anyone with an interest in archaeology. That's because, year after year, the show has offered a snapshot of the latest research and a chance to glimpse the work of those out in the – sometimes muddy and windswept – field.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic inevitably impacting on research, the latest tranche of episodes once again captures the raw excitement of finding artefacts that may change our understanding of the past. That's especially true when cameras record the final stages of excavations at the site of the old St Mary's Norman Church in Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire. Excavating a circular ditch around what were thought to be the foundations of an early medieval tower, archaeologists were confronted with older artefacts: statues and the remains of a glass jug, dating from the Roman era.

As ever, anatomist and biological anthropologist Professor Alice Roberts acts as our guide to the work. We can also expect to see the discovery of a hitherto unknown Roman town, research into an Iron Age settlement, and days when a stunning mosaic, once housed in a Roman villa and depicting scenes from Homer's *Iliad*, was revealed.

Meet the ancestors

The Essay: Iron Age Britain and its Peoples / BBC Radio 3, January

What was life like in Britain in the centuries before the Romans invaded, years when the British mainland and its smaller islands had their own distinct culture? It's a question historians and writers examine from different angles in a new 15-part series to be broadcast over three tranches in 2022.

Contributors include Dr Miles Russell (*pictured*), whose talks include a discussion of King Arthur, and the poet and playwright Menna Elfyn, who focuses on the tribes of Wales. Miles is also the expert advisor for our Essential Guide to Roman Britain – see p28.

EXHIBITION

Fabergé in London: Romance to Revolution

PAID ENTRY V&A, London, until 8 May 2022, *vam.ac.uk*

Carl Fabergé (1846–1920) was one of Russia's finest jewellers and goldsmiths, and his world-famous Fabergé eggs have long symbolised Imperial Russian elegance. However, Fabergé also had an important British connection, forged when he opened a branch of the family business in London in 1903.

Showcasing more than 200 of the craftsman's most intricate works, this major new V&A exhibition sheds light on the story behind Fabergé's little-known London branch, revealing how he found admirers at the very top of British society and ended up creating bespoke pieces for the monarchy. At the heart of the display, visitors can explore some of the charming hardstone sculptures Fabergé created for Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, representing animals found on their Sandringham estate, as well as a sumptuous rock crystal vase presented to George V on the day of his coronation.

The final section of the exhibition, however, is reserved for a stunning, kaleidoscopic presentation of some of Fabergé's Imperial Easter eggs, including the Tercentenary Egg, presented to the Romanov family to commemorate the 300th anniversary of their rule, as well as the Third Imperial Egg, given to Empress Maria Feodorovna by Alexander III in 1887, but only rediscovered in 1964.

ABOVE: **A French bulldog carved from wood, with diamond eyes**

LEFT: **The Romanov Tercentenary egg, commemorating the 300-year rule of the Russian dynasty**

RIGHT: **The Alexander Palace egg, made for Tsar Nicholas II in 1908**

THE MOSCOW KREMLIN MUSEUMS X2, WARTSKI, HORACE OVÉ, DENZIL FORRESTER, GETTY X2, CROWN COPYRIGHT COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES X2

Trinidad-born British filmmaker Horace Ové gives a Black Power speech in 1967

Jah Shaka by Denzil Forrester, depicting London's dub scene during the 1980s

EXHIBITION

Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s–Now

PAID ENTRY Tate Britain, London, until 3 April 2022, *tate.org.uk*

A new exhibition showcasing the work of dozens of pioneering Caribbean-British artists is now on display in London. Spanning the arrival of the 1950s Windrush generation to the present day, highlights from the retrospective include works by the Guyanese-born painter Aubrey Williams, who co-founded the Caribbean Artists Movement during the 1960s, as well as photographs by Neil Kenlock, who documented black British life while growing up in Brixton.

More recent works, meanwhile – such as those of Barbadian-Scottish artist Alberta Whittle – address Caribbean-British identity in the 21st century, and debates surrounding decolonisation and the legacy of slavery.

EXHIBITION

The 1920s: Beyond the Roar

FREE ENTRY The National Archives, London, opens 21 January 2022, *nationalarchives.gov.uk*

Later this year, the 1921 Census of England and Wales will finally be released to the public, allowing researchers to uncover fresh stories about their ancestors and plug missing gaps in their family trees. To celebrate this landmark event, the National Archives is launching a new exhibition, shining a spotlight on society at the time. To bring the era to life, visitors will be able to walk down a 1920s urban street, complete with a polling station and draper's shop, before entering a recreation of Soho's 43 Club. Meanwhile, records and film clips from the archive collections will add helpful context to the period – from lonely hearts adverts, to footage of peace treaties.

A WWI victory parade (*above*), and a 1920s poster published by the Empire Marketing Board (*left*)

EXHIBITION

Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters

PAID ENTRY The Box, Plymouth, until 27 February 2022, *theboxplymouth.com*

A touring exhibition devoted to the ancient sagas of indigenous Australians is currently on display in Plymouth. The multimedia spectacle, conceived and created by Aboriginal artists in partnership with the National Museum of Australia, features more than 300 paintings, photographs and objects directly inspired by 'songlines' – networks of paths through the landscape tied to Aboriginal creation stories and knowledge. As visitors traverse the exhibition, they will be taken on an artistic journey covering three states, three deserts and some 500,000 sq km of territory, bringing the songlines to life in vivid detail.

ABOVE: **Acrylic works in the 'Martu Country' section of the exhibition**
INSET: **A Seven Sisters tree woman, created by the Tjanpi Desert Weavers**

EXHIBITION

Tip Girls

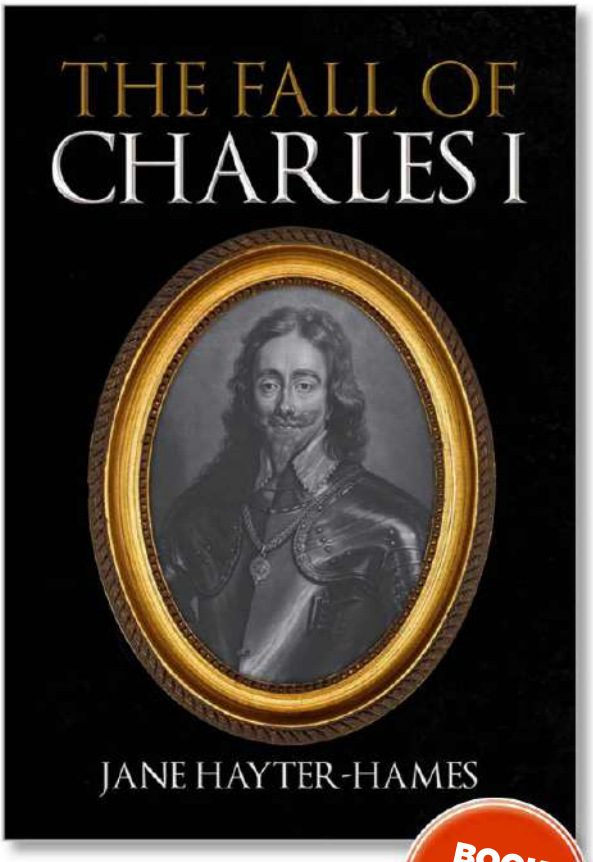
FREE ENTRY Big Pit National Coal Museum, Pontypool, until September 2022, *museum.wales/bigpit*

When we think of coal miners, we often think of men, but women and girls also played a crucial part in Wales' mining industry, too – whether at the coal face itself, or above ground. This new exhibition delves into the experiences of female coal workers over the centuries, featuring fascinating first-person accounts and outfits. Crucially, the display also deals with the impact of the 1842 Mines and Collieries Act, which banned the use of women and children miners underground, and resulted in female miners working as 'Tip Girls', hauling and sorting coal at the surface.

A female mineworker in Tredegar, pictured c1865

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS



BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Fall of Charles I

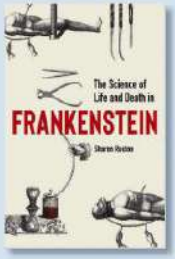
By Jane Hayter-Hames
Amberley, £20, hardback, 320 pages

Charles I's story is dominated by its end: with the king pitting Crown against Parliament in the Civil Wars, and with his show trial and execution in January 1649. It's one of the most dramatic downfalls in British history – but to what extent was it sparked by Charles' own incompetence? This detailed book dives deep into the political, religious and military undercurrents of the 17th century, assessing how those forces, and key figures, contributed to the bloody, brutal climax.

The Science of Life and Death in Frankenstein

By Sharon Ruston
Bodleian Library, £25, hardback, 240 pages

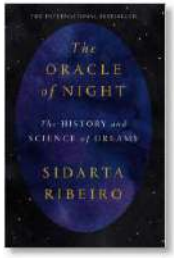
Famously written by 18-year-old Mary Shelley in a villa in Switzerland during the sepulchral summer of 1816, *Frankenstein: or The Modern Prometheus* drew on key ideas and developments of its age, including new discoveries about electricity and oxygen and techniques for reviving people on the brink of death. The novel captivated audiences by tapping into the unease such innovations provoked, and this lively history explores what that fascination tells us about the era – and why the story is still compelling today.



The Oracle of Night: The History and Science of Dreams

By Sidarta Ribeiro
Bantam Press, £20, hardback, 480 pages

What causes dreams? How did people in the past understand them? And what *does* that repeated nightmare about being chased by a big cat mean? The answers lie within this exploration of why we dream and how we make sense of it. As befits the subject matter, it's a heady brew, which blends the biological with the historical and can sometimes drift towards the academic. Yet it's full of insights into a phenomenon that unifies human experience across the millennia.



White Debt: The Demerara Uprising and Britain's Legacy of Slavery

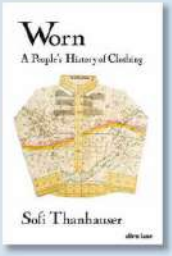
by Thomas Harding
W&N, £20, hardback, 320 pages

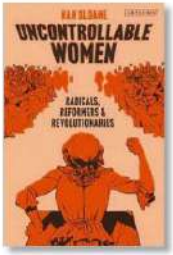
In 1823, more than 10,000 enslaved people in the colony of Demerara – what's now Guyana – rose up against plantation owners and colonial rulers. The non-violent rebellion, which lasted two days, was brutally, devastatingly quashed. After discovering family links to slavery, Thomas Harding set out to learn more about the story, and his book draws on eyewitness accounts to chart the events and their repercussions. He also challenges us to think again about the legacy of slavery in 21st-century Britain.

Worn: A People's History of Clothing

By Sofi Thanhauser
Allen Lane, £20, hardback, 400 pages

Opening with a tale of a teenage run-in with a paper dress that gave its author a new respect for the value of fabric, this book explores humanity's relationship with the material world: linen, cotton, silk and synthetics. From the world's very first clothes, fashioned from animal skins, to the present-day resurgence of woollen garments, it never loses sight of the human stories surrounding their manufacture, use, and cultural significance. The book is written from an American perspective, but is global in scope – and surprisingly political.





Uncontrollable Women: Radicals, Reformers and Revolutionaries

By Nan Sloane
IB Tauris, £20, hardback, 304 pages

This revealing set of profiles of female pioneers who broke new ground in a male-dominated world broadens the focus from the usual figures (such as Florence Nightingale) to highlight a cast that's likely to be much less familiar. Susannah Wright, for instance, was dubbed "the She-Champion of Impiety" for disseminating radical texts, while Helen Maria Williams' support for the French Revolution led to imprisonment. These are incredible stories that deserve to be better known.

PODCAST WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of our favourite podcasts from the BBC and HistoryExtra

The Rest is History: World Cup of Kings and Queens

bit.ly/RestPod103

Dominic Sandbrook and Tom Holland's entertaining podcast series embarked on a World Cup of Kings and Queens in the final months of 2021, asking Twitter users to vote for their pick of England's greatest monarch. The discussion of the contenders and the eventual winner is lively and, as you'd expect, packed with surprising historical nuggets.

You're Dead to Me: Mary Wollstonecraft

bit.ly/JennerPod103

If you're intrigued by the stories of feminist figures featured in Nan Sloane's new book (*see above*) and want to find out more, this instalment of Greg Jenner's podcast series is a great place to start. He's joined by Corin Throsby and comedian Cariad Lloyd to discuss the life of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97), who remains influential today.

Everything You Wanted to Know: Espionage

bit.ly/EspionagePod103

Delve into the shady world of spycraft with this edition of HistoryExtra's *Everything You Wanted to Know* series, which sees historian Michael Goodman tackle listener questions. From the reality behind the gadgets depicted in big-screen thrillers to the ways in which animals were employed to ferret out the truth, it's entertaining, eye-opening stuff.

GETTY IMAGES

HISTORICAL FICTION...

A Terrible Kindness

By Jo Browning Wroe
Faber & Faber, £14.99, hardback, 400 pages

It's October 1966, and 19-year-old William Lavery is attending the Midlands Chapter of the Institute of Embalmers Ladies' Night Dinner Dance. But the mood changes when news comes in of a horrific tragedy: a landslide from a coal mine has buried a school in the Welsh village of Aberfan, trapping children and their teachers. William volunteers to go and help the search efforts and take on his first job as an embalmer. It will be a decision that has a profound impact on the rest of his life.

Excerpt

Our central character, William Lavery, is celebrating his qualification as an embalmer, not knowing that he will soon be driving through the night to a village in south Wales in desperate need of his help...

OCTOBER 1966
Something dreadful happened in Wales yesterday, but it was William's graduation and so he has been distracted. He left the Thames College of Embalming with outstanding and unprecedented results. Tonight is the annual social highlight for the Midlands Chapter of the Institute of Embalmers; the Ladies' Night Dinner Dance in Nottingham. To celebrate William's success, and equip him for his first social highlight, Uncle Robert has bought him a dinner suit and a bow tie. Aged nineteen, William is a little excited, but mostly terrified by the news from his uncle that their president, David Melling, is going to ensure that a fuss is made of him.

Fifty miles from home in Birmingham, William will spend his first night in a hotel; the Lace Market, along with Uncle Robert and his business partner, Howard. Sharing a table with them are the Strouds, an undertaking family from Solihull, and on William's left, the only other person his age, Gloria Finch, also from an undertaking family, with whom William lodged during his year at college in Stepney. Glorious Gloria, whom William has loved from their first conversation a year ago, drinking cocoa in the Finches' cosy galley kitchen, while her parents watched telly in the lounge. Tonight, she's wearing a tight black dress with sequins, through which her whole body seems to be winking at William.

MARTIN BOND

Q&A
Jo Browning Wroe

Jo grew up in a crematorium in Birmingham. She holds an MA in creative writing from the University of East Anglia and is now a creative writing supervisor at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. *A Terrible Kindness*, inspired by the events of the 1966 Aberfan disaster, is her debut novel.

You lived at a crematorium during your childhood. How did your upbringing influence the novel?
Much more than I realised at the time! I grew up with a lack of squeamishness about death. I saw on a daily basis, as hearses passed the window, that people died and that the people who loved them were set apart, as if for a time they had become a different species. I saw undertakers, solicitous and dignified, there to help them. This gave me an innate respect for a profession that many people don't know much about.

Why did you choose the Aberfan disaster as a setting?
It happened when I was three – I don't remember not knowing about it. When I came across an account by Billy Doggart, who coordinated the volunteer embalmers, I was stunned by what they achieved under the circumstances. I wanted to explore the impact on those who give their time and expertise to help people in such extreme distress. The novel begins and ends in Aberfan, with 17 years in the life of William [the story's fictional protagonist] in between.

What would you like readers to take from your novel?
The possibility of kindness, music and laughter helping us deal with all manner of hurt. Respect for the embalmers who went to Aberfan and the people they went to help.

Which other historical periods interest you?
I lived in America during the mid-1980s; Ronald Reagan was president, *Back to the Future* was a box-office hit, and the doomed space shuttle *Challenger* contained the aunt of a local schoolboy. The intensity of being in a new country during a decisively new chapter of my life feels like material to mine.

As for a time when I wasn't alive, I'm also interested in the 1930s to the 1950s. My parents always referenced the war, but I had no concept of just how close it must have seemed to them. My mother was evacuated and my father's street was bombed. Some of the characters in *A Terrible Kindness* would have been similarly affected, so I may go on to explore what made them who they were.

How do you help your students write historical fiction?
They always have an interesting motivation – an ancestor, a family heirloom, or a diary that has snagged their interest. Or maybe an event has just gripped them. This usually comes with tremendous motivation to research the historical context, and it's wonderful to watch stories grow out of this process.

CROSSWORD

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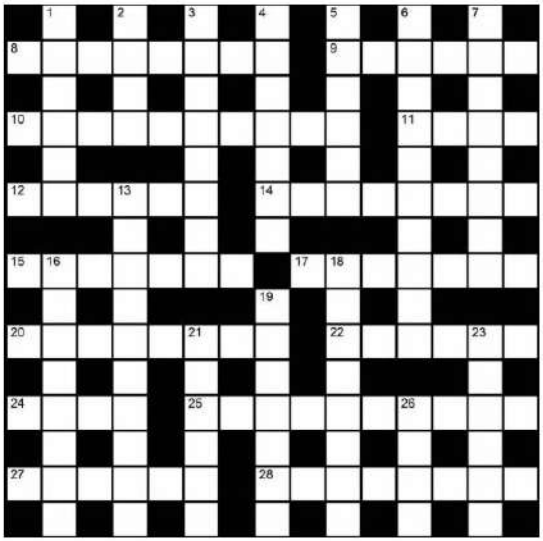
ACROSS

8 Christopher ___ (1451–1506), Italian explorer (8)
9 Pacific US state, admitted to the Union on 14 February 1859 (6)
10 Bavarian secret society founded by Adam Weishaupt in 1776 (10)
11 Russian assembly, founded in 1905 by Nicholas II (4)
12 Sir Galahad or Sir Lancelot, perhaps? (6)
14 Country formerly known as Siam (8)
15 Football club founded in west London in 1905 (7)
17 Sovereign ruler of an empire (7)
20 Term for the period 1918–39 (8)
22 Vasco ___ (d1524), Portuguese explorer (2,4)
24 Monarch (4)
25 City in Pakistan, formerly the largest garrison town of the British Indian Army (10)
27 ___ Washington (1731–1802), first First Lady (6)
28 Bernardo ___ (1778–1842), Chilean independence leader (8)

DOWN

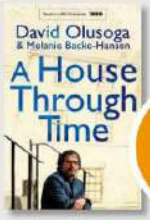
1 Janis ___ (1943–70), US blues and rock vocalist (6)
2 ___ Kingdom, former monarchy in South Africa (4)
3 Drink known historically as the 'green fairy' (8)
4 Ancient goddess of the Near East (7)
5 1955 novel by Vladimir Nabokov (6)
6 German university founded in 1386 (10)



Set by Richard Smyth

7 Member of a specialist British military force, active in 1940–46 (8)
13 San Francisco bridge completed in 1937 (6,4)
16 General and statesman of ancient Carthage (b247 BC) (8)
18 Colombian city, known historically for gold and coffee (8)
19 1872 satire by Samuel Butler (7)
21 ___ Uprising, Polish Resistance operation undertaken in summer 1944 (6)
23 Holy city of Islam in Saudi Arabia (6)
26 Othello villain (4)

CHANCE TO WIN



BOOK WORTH £10.99 FOR THREE WINNERS

A House Through Time
By David Olusoga and Melanie Backe-Hansen

HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **BBC History Revealed, January 2022 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **january2022@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk** by noon on **1 February 2022**.

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SOLUTION Nº 101

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all UK residents (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Co London Ltd employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry per person.

The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of ***BBC History Revealed***) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy. The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 28 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.
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LETTERS

A 19th-century depiction of the battle of Bosworth in August 1485. Reader Dr R Pacak, a self-professed Ricardian, enjoyed our recent Wars of the Roses special (*below right*)

THE 'IMMORTAL' ARMY OF ANCIENT PERSIA
THE TUDORS IN FIVE SENSES
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HISTORY REVEALED
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY
Meet the real pirates of the Caribbean and discover the truth behind the legends
10 QUOTATIONS
BBC
HISTORY REVEALED
100th issue
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE
WARS OF THE ROSES
The medieval clash that tore England apart and launched the Tudor dynasty

PIRATE ISSUE PRAISE

Although I enjoy every issue, I have to say that your December 2021 edition (*above left*) has really persuaded me to put pen to paper, so to speak. I thoroughly enjoyed it, which was a welcome distraction during these bleak times. Thank you!

The Essential Guide to the Golden Age of Piracy was so accessible, informative and insightful, summarising pirate history so well (indeed, all of your articles are engaging, and never dry). It was great to see so many pirate myths debunked – especially the one about buried treasure.

The Tudor England Through the Five Senses article made my day, too, and learning of how long it took to play the board game *The Campaign for North Africa* (Q&A) was interesting – although I don't think I'll be buying it!

Thanks for always putting out such a great magazine. I can't claim to have been a reader since issue one, sadly, but I have enjoyed it all the times I have read it.

Stephen Parry, by email

A RICARDIAN REVIEW

You made my day when I got the 100th issue through my letterbox and pictured on the cover was the Wars of the Roses (*above right*). As a Ricardian, it was a nice surprise! The Richard III Society held its AGM in York in October and there was also the Barnet Medieval Festival in September, so the past few weeks have been very exciting for me. Keep up the good work, and well done on your 100th issue.

Dr R Pacak OBE, by email

WINNING WORDS

In the Christmas 2021 issue, we announced the 10 winners of our recent Letters to Santa competition, aimed at readers aged 6–13. We were delighted to hear from two of the successful entrants, who wrote in to share their excitement...

Dear Charlotte,

I was so happy to find out that I was a winner, and I can't wait for a copy of the magazine. Many thanks to you and the judges for picking my letter. Thank you for the book vouchers. I would like to buy two Harry Potter books with them.

Evelyn, by email

Dear Charlotte,

I was so happy to win a book token and be in the magazine. Thank you so much, I can't wait to buy some lovely books.

Benedict, via email

GETTY IMAGES

NEXT ISSUE

··· ON SALE 20 JANUARY ···

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Discover the rise of the machine in the 18th and 19th centuries – from the brutality of child labour, to the incredible advances in technology and industry

PLUS... THE WOMEN WHO SERVED KING AND COUNTRY IN WWII WHAT IF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD FAILED? **CATHERINE OF ARAGON AND ANNE BOLEYN: MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT?** IN A NUTSHELL: THE TERRACOTTA WARRIORS **SPOTLIGHT ON ROMULUS AUGUSTUS** AND MUCH MORE...

CROSSWORD WINNERS

The three lucky winners of the crossword from issue 100 are:

G Corbitt, Darlington
U McDermott, address withheld
J Saunders, Bourne

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Six Minutes to Midnight* on DVD.

Please note, due to Covid-19, we will be unable to post your prize until we are working in the office once more. Please bear with us!

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GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO FINISH

ARRESTING IMAGES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE PAST

A DOG'S DINNER
1899

It's dinner time at this Berlin dog pound, and this animal keeper certainly has his work cut out for him. While not much is known about the provenance of this particular image, Germany has long been one of the leaders in animal protection, and introduced some of the earliest animal welfare laws. In 1881, the German Animal Welfare Federation was established as an umbrella organisation for shelters and other welfare associations. More recently, in 2021, Germany enacted a new law showing how much they still love man's best friend: all dog owners are now required to walk their pet twice a day (for more than an hour in total), after concerns were raised that the country's canine population was not getting enough exercise.

GETTY IMAGES

This was Sylvia's promise to you...

A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And for so many survivors the road to recovery is still long and desperately lonely. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

But it doesn't have to be like this. You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

You can promise future generations a world where researchers discover new treatments and surgeries and every single stroke survivor has the best care, rehabilitation and support network possible, to help them rebuild their lives.

Big or small, every legacy gift left to the Stroke Association will make a difference to stroke survivors and their families.

Find out how by calling 020 7566 1505

or email legacy@stroke.org.uk

or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

Rebuilding lives after stroke

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 369), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.

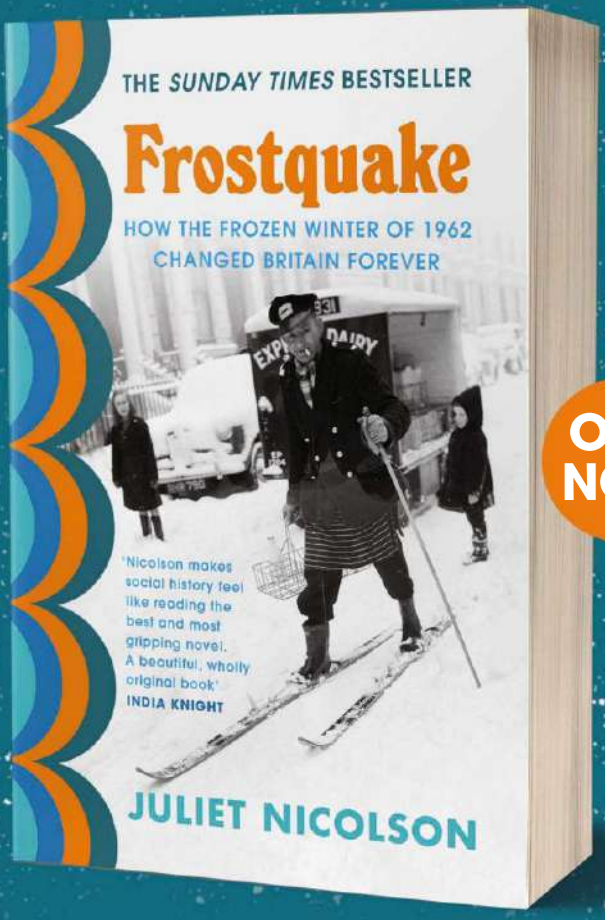
Stroke Association

On Boxing Day 1962, the snow began to fall.

It did not stop for ten weeks.

'Those who lived through it will never forget it. Those who didn't, need to know about it… This book is a must'

PETER HENNESSY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'Nicolson makes social history feel like reading the best and most gripping novel. A beautiful, wholly original book'
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This is the story of the winter that changed Britain forever.

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